COMPUTER ARTS

DESIGN MATTERS

ISSUE #270

SEPTEMBER 2017
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THE UK

NEW SERIES

BE A BETTER JUNIOR DESIGNER

Pro advice to nail every task
and impress where it counts

HOW TO RUN A THRIVING

STUDIOS

OVERCOME THE SIX BIGGEST
HURDLES THAT YOUR
STUDIO FACES

Future

SOFTWARE ISN'T EVERYTHING
Why design students should switch off the
computer and develop themselves instead

DESIGN STUNNING BOOK COVERS
Classic novels yield so many creative
opportunities, says Adrian Shaughnessy

Making
the cover

With our cover feature offering advice on the day-to-day politics of small studios, we knew we wanted our cover illustration to focus on the heart of a thriving office environment – the relationships between the people.

Guillaume Kurkdjian's isometric style – gorgeously stylised worlds, populated by bustling miniature people – was a perfect fit for the intimate feel we wanted to convey. We knew that we wanted the 'studio' coverline to stand out from a distance (and Kurkdjian's beautiful, distinctive colour scheme ensured that immediately), but we also knew we wanted readers to look close into the illustration and relish all kinds of quirks and details.

From our initial sketch, there were remarkably few draft developments: Kurkdjian developed our first ideas and executed them rapidly with bags of beautiful extra flourishes.

It was delightful to watch our tiny studio get built, coloured and brought to life by a maestro.

GUILLAUME KURKDJIAN
Guillaume has a client list that includes IBM and Huffington Post, and a cult following on Behance and Tumblr. He describes his work as "colourful, smooth, naive but cheeky, often exciting and geometric."
www.handsomefrank.com

Right: Our first sketch to Guillaume Kurkdjian crammed in as many scenarios and industry roles as possible, with designers at desks, meetings at breakout areas and even an informal gathering at a watercooler. An initial 'relaxing' boss (seen right, reclining on the letter 'U') was soon struck out.

Above: Kurkdjian's early draft immediately captured the atmosphere we wanted. We scribbled even more details on top (above left), and ensured that each letter had its own narrative so we could break apart the cover illustration, and scatter them throughout the feature. This was an important part of the initial brief, as we wanted readers to be able to pore over the illustration in greater detail.

Editor's letter

As any design company founder will tell you, running a successful studio takes a lot more than design prowess. You need plenty of guts, determination, and the kind of business savvy that may not always come naturally to creative people.

With all of this in mind, our cover story this month sets out six of the biggest hurdles that are likely to stand in the way of your creative business' growth, and gives you 36 gems of essential advice to help you leave them in your wake – so you don't just survive, but thrive.

For a hit of design inspiration, regular CA contributor Adrian Shaughnessy explores the eclectic world of book cover design, a field in which even the most iconic works of fiction regularly get a creative facelift – an interesting contrast, he points out, with correspondingly seminal works in music or even household-name FMCG brands.

Many such brands feature in the shortlist for our fourth-annual Brand Impact Awards, and the hotly-anticipated winners will be announced next issue. To whet your appetite, we took six of our stellar judging panel aside during their deliberations to discuss three hot topics in branding: the need for brands to demonstrate wit and empathy, the importance of taking creative risks, and the most exciting aesthetic and technological trends on the horizon, and how to get the most from them.

This issue, we also kick off a brand-new series dedicated to the practical skills that junior designers need on a daily basis. First up is colour correction, with the dark art of image manipulation coming in part two. Let us know if you find it useful – and see you next month.

● NICK CARSON
Editor
nick.carson@futurenet.com

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH…

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CHLOE TEMPLEMAN

Chloe is design director at independent agency Design Bridge. On page 23, she shares why she loves working with illustrators, and outlines the elements of a fruitful collaboration.
www.designbridge.com

STUART MCMILLAN

Stuart is creative director at agency lg2, based in Montreal. He reflects on creating a powerful project that aims to make the world more accepting of transgender children on page 92.
www.lg2.com

SUE DAUN

Sue is ECD at Interbrand London, and one of the judges for this year's Brand Impact Awards. On page 76, she and five other BIA judges discuss what it takes to create successful branding campaigns.
www.interbrand.com

SCOTT KIMBLE

Image creation director at London's BrandOpus, Scott shares his tips for colour correction on page 70, as part of our new series focusing on common tasks for junior designers.
www.brandopus.com

AART-JAN VENEMA

Aart-Jan's illustrations for Green Man festival led to him being crowned overall professional winner at this year's World Illustration Awards. On page 88, he shares his tips for event illustration.
www.aartjanvenema.com

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MEET THE TEAM

NICK CARSON
EDITOR
Nick and his fiancée had a 'wedding recce' in Scotland, meeting photographer, caterer, celebrant and visiting their lochside venue, booked on blind faith earlier this year (it was being refurbed). Luckily, it was awesome.

MARK WYNNE
ART EDITOR
Accosted by a kindly fortune teller in Bloomsbury, Mark learned he would live to the ripe old age of 75, but that his soul would not find happiness until his *next* incarnation. #goodnewsbadnews

ROSIE HILDER
OPERATIONS EDITOR
Rosie had her debut performance with her new 'rock and pop' choir this month, so has had Eternal's I Wanna Be The Only One in her head pretty much constantly. The dance moves are best forgotten.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

GARETH JONES
VIDEO PRODUCER
Aside from being busy perfecting his badminton game, Gareth was reunited with Steve Middleton from Celloglas and Mark Cooper from Colour Five to produce another Computer Arts cover video.

JULIA SAGAR
CONTRIBUTOR-AT-LARGE
This month, Julia has been back in the office editing Creative Bloq. She was briefly the owner of a kitchen she didn't want and two bathrooms (she only has space for one), but normal life has since resumed.

Production notes

PRINTERS
TEXT AND COVER CMYK, PLUS MATT LAMINATE VARNISH
William Gibbons

PRINT FINISHING PARTNER:

Celloglas™

PAPER
COVER
Precision Special Gloss FSC 250gsm
P3−74: Ultra Mag Plus Gloss 90gsm
P75−98: GraphoInvent 70gsm

TYPEFACES
Trump Gothic West, Akkurat, Simplo, Kondola and Calluna

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BACK TO BASICS

REGULARS

GEOMETRIC ILLUSIONS

Drawing on mesh textures and inspired mechanisms to form a trellis of shapes that play with the user's perspective, these flexible product and furniture designs appear to morph when viewed at different angles

VOLUME CHAIR BY EDVARD & STEENFATT
Inspired by the properties of steel, Edvard & Steenfatt's Volume chair exemplifies both strength and fluidity. Formed with perforated steel sheets pressed into a curve, the design also accentuates the chair's contrasting seamless tubular steel legs.

MIRROR 3 BY IAN STELL FOR PATRICK PARRISH GALLERY
The articulated form of Mirror 3 uses internal pivots that allow each panel to expand and contract like a concertina. The result is a honeycomb fixture that plays with perception.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Clemens Kois

PHOTOGRAPHY: Chikako Harada

**SIDEWINDER TABLE BY IAN STELL
FOR PATRICK PARRISH GALLERY**
The Sidewinder table is a functional object
inspired by the pantograph mechanical
linkage system, invented in the 17th century.
It morphs into countless configurations to
fit any modern living space, whether it's
big or small, wide or narrow.

**AITA SHELVES AND
REKI METAL CHAIR
BY MINNI SIRELÄ**
Minni Sirelä uses tilted
metal rods to pique
visual interest for the
simple and general-
purpose Reki chair.
The stark black grid
of Sirelä's Aita shelves
forms a cohesive
geometric ensemble.
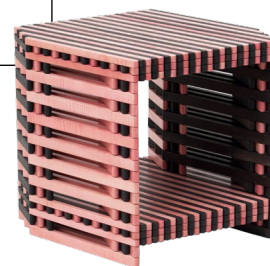
FRANKLINTILL STUDIO

Design Futures / Material Futures / Colour Futures

FranklinTill Studio is a forecasting agency and creative consultancy that
works with lifestyle brands across the disciplinary spectrum to provide
research-based insights that drive creative innovations in materials,
colour and design. It creates reports, publications, exhibitions and events
with the aim of making its research both accessible and inspiring. It also
edits and produces two magazines, published by View Publications,
which you can buy from www.viewpoint-magazine.com.

VIEWPOINT DESIGN
Viewpoint delivers visual, editorial and statistical information to brands,
designers, agencies and consumer insight teams determined to create
lifestyle products, campaigns and environments that anticipate consumer
demand. Written by professionals in the branding and design business,
each issue explores how a significant trend will impact consumer
behaviour and the global design landscape.

VIEWPOINT COLOUR
Launched December 2016, Viewpoint Colour offers visual inspiration,
design direction and a global perspective on colour. The inaugural
issue provides an in-depth analysis of the personality traits of emerging
colour stories, explaining why they are relevant now and how they are
currently being applied.

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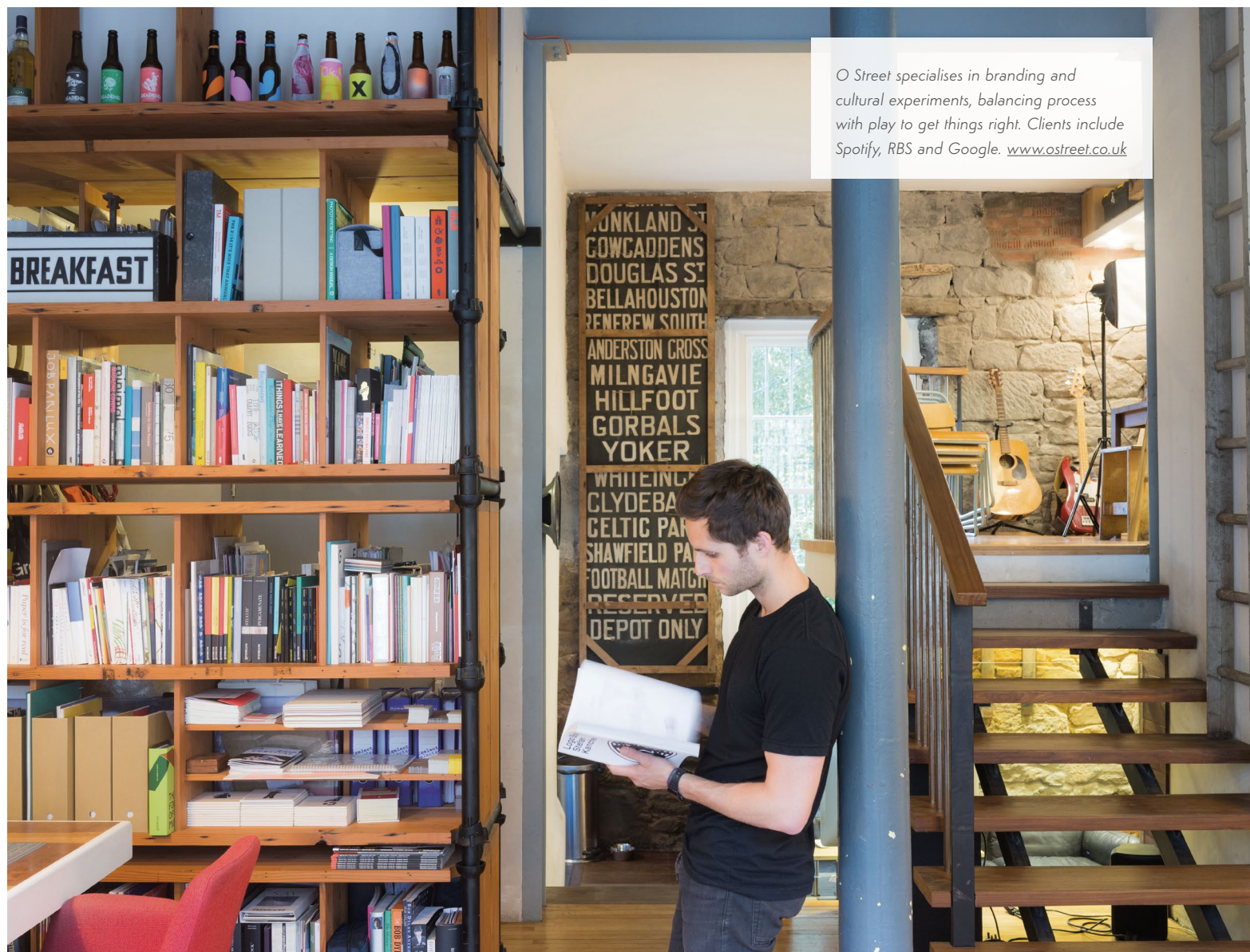
O Street specialises in branding and cultural experiments, balancing process with play to get things right. Clients include Spotify, RBS and Google. www.ostreet.co.uk

MY DESIGN SPACE IS...

GLASGOW INDUSTRIAL

O Street's studio manager, Josh Peter, shares how beer and music keep the team inspired

A pproaching its flagship space like a design project in its own right, O Street renovated its studio seven years ago, restoring the original architectural features of a former laundromat, and earning a Friends of Glasgow West Award to boot.

"The look of our studio is decidedly 'Glasgow industrial'," reflects studio manager and designer, Josh Peter. "It's functional, it's beautiful, it works." But despite this, Peter still points to the studio's

close proximity to some of Glasgow's best food and coffee as one of its main advantages.

In keeping with the studio's sociable spirit, O Street regularly puts on gatherings called Beertimes (**1**). The team invite creatives doing interesting things into their studio, and pair them up with a one-off beer. "It's a chance for us to explore packaging design and curate an interesting experience, not to mention the good company and booze," explains Peter.

More booze-related memorabilia comes in the form of the Cubs pennant flag (**2**). "We've got a Cubs fan in the house, and we keep him calm by hanging this 1984 pennant flag," says Peter. "It smells like hotdogs and beer. We're opening a studio in Colorado late this year, so expect to see the addition of some Rockies kit."

Although O Street is "adapting to and having a lot of fun in the digital world," the team still find immense value in old-school

techniques and tools, such as this magnifier (**3**). They also enjoy using graphic design in varied ways. "Sometimes we team up with other makers to do something special, like this typography-heavy longboard," (**4**) says Peter. "We spend many a lunch hour endangering Glasgow pedestrians with this bad boy."

The team have a running joke that they're "just a bunch of failed musicians," hence the guitar in their studio (**5**). "Like any good joke," says Peter, "it's funny because it's true." ◻
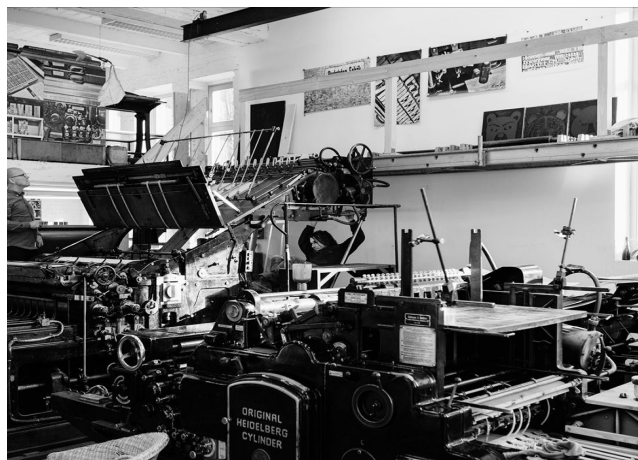
Erik Spiekermann's experimental letterpress workshop, 98a, is the birthplace of post-digital printing.

NEW VENTURES

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Louis Rossetto, co-founder of Wired, and tyography legend
Erik Spiekermann discuss how they're revolutionising printing

C hange Is Good is a new fiction book by Louis Rossetto about the birth of the dot-com age. And fittingly for a book about a revolution, it's the first book to be designed and printed by Erik Spiekermann's new printing process, which he calls 'post-digital printing'. This method will use a combination of new laser plate cutting technology and letterpress to print 1,000 copies of the book, which is available on Kickstarter. We caught up with Rossetto and Spiekermann to find out more.

What are the benefits of letterpress printing compared to offset?
Louis Rossetto: Offset printing handles colour really well. But at the same time, when you're reading a book that's only text, offset doesn't deliver on a quality level like letterpress used to. On the other hand, letterpress has the limitation of not being able to do typography well. What Erik's able to do in developing this new technology is marry the advances that have occurred in typography over the last 30 years to the clear benefits of letterpress, in terms of its black type and sharp forms impressed into the paper. The whole package ends up being startlingly better than what we're used to.

What's the process for this new method?
Erik Spiekermann: We bought an image setter machine that cuts into polymer plastic with a laser, and then we can print from those plates. We put these plates with metal backs in our machine, which has a magnetic base. It goes into the printing press, and stays

there. And then we get the impression, the raised surface, of the letters.

Tell us about Change Is Good...
LR: Change Is Good is a story about a moment that changed the world. In the nineties, there were young people with fire in their eyes, with big ideas and a passion to make change happen. Change is Good is about those people and their challenges. It's utterly appropriate that the story of this era of revolutionary change is brought out on new technology which will revolutionise printing.

Are there any types of books that you think wouldn't print well using this method?
ES: Text is where letterpress shines, but we can imagine printing books using a mix of processes, for example, full colour offset and black type, or other combinations. We are no Luddites, and we like all types of printing on paper – including using our Risograph.

What's the future of post-digital printing?
ES: Bringing together the best of each technology: digital type and typesetting offer more choices and better precision. Letterpress printing makes type look better than watery offset. We've already printed two books for a major German publisher, and will print another five titles this year.

What advice do you have for someone wanting to get more from letterpress, who doesn't have your resources?
ES: Come and buy plates from us. We need to get our money back on our investment. ◻

DIVIDED WE FALL

Following Glug's summer blowout, **Nick Carson** chats to some of the partygoers about the need for unity in divisive times

glug

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KEY INFO:

Location

Cargo, Shoreditch

www.glugevents.com

When

22 June 2017

Studios attending

NB Studio, Wolff Olins, Jelly, Output Group, Poke, ustwo, Mainframe, Golden Wolf, R/GA, Fontsmith, Jack Renwick Studio and many more

O ur events section took a break last issue so we could squeeze in as much top graduate talent as possible, but back at the end of June, team CA rounded off a packed couple of days touring the London degree shows with some much-needed beers at Glug's Shoreditch Summer Party.

Taking place during Cannt Festival – the rest of the industry's two-fingers-up to the exclusive sun-soaked yacht parties of Cannes – the party went for a vibe in keeping with Cannt's slogan: 'Cannt be divided.'

We chatted to some of the creatives in attendance about what this actually means in practice, and how our industry can pull together in increasingly divisive times.

"The very nature of creativity is about making connections, and our business operates on the strength of the relationships we form with clients, staff, peers and consumers," said NB's Tom Moloney.

Particularly for smaller studios, these connections can have

huge practical value: "Without collaboration, you're limited to the skills you have in-house," pointed out Ian Hambleton, Output Group's chief executive. "It's impossible to hire the best people in every area, so why not work with world-class people in different fields?"

"Strength lies in numbers," agreed Kyle Wilkinson, co-founder of Hacksaw. "There is always someone who's better than you at something: collaborating with them is key to elevating a project."

D&AD WORKSHOP: HOW BRANDS TALK

CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Nick Carson discovers the true power of brand voice, thanks to Vikki Ross

A way from the annual frenzy of its Awards and New Blood, D&AD runs year-round professional development workshops. We paid a visit to How Brands Talk, a half-day session by veteran copywriter Vikki Ross.

A key thread was soon apparent: consistency is key. That applies to every piece of copy a brand touches, not just above-the-line campaigns but oft-neglected things like T&Cs and 404 error pages.

Treat brand copywriting like a conversation. Talking in the active voice, in the first person, helps. To demonstrate this, Ross bastardised the famous slogans of McDonald's and Nike into: 'It is being loved' and 'Make sure it gets done'.

Small tweaks can warm up copy instantly: try contracting 'you are' to 'you're' or swapping formal words like 'view' or 'receive' to 'watch' and 'get'.

According to Ross, sports brands are active; the luxury sector is aspirational. Beauty brands are creative with the truth – she highlighted the rather dubious promise of 'ageless eyes' – and car brands talk "nonsense", such as 'luxuriously luxurious' and 'inspiration engineered'.

Bucking tired trends is the aim, but the first step is to define what a brand's voice should be. For Ross, it's about purpose and personality – what the brand does, and how it talks about it. You can even break it down into specific words and phrases. But remember: be consistent. ◻

Of course, for designers in the UK in particular, the looming uncertainty of Brexit is a divisive force to be reckoned with. "British design is at the top of the tree, but this is only possible because of the many talented foreign nationals that we are lucky to attract to our shores," said Wilkinson.

"I worry that the amazing abundance of foreign talent will look elsewhere, which would be devastating for British design. Continuing to collaborate with talent from across the globe is key to continually raising the bar."

Glug organiser Malin Persson is encouraged by the attitude of creative people: "People are standing up to, banging the drums of, and passionately fighting the causes of these issues," she said. "I believe we'll soon see a whole lot of action being taken as well."

Ultimately, Persson continued, emphasising collaboration over competition is how the industry can bridge the gap. "If we all try our hardest to be more diverse, more inclusive, more aware of the highs and the lows, we'll see a much quicker way out," she insisted.

Events like Glug that bring the community together play a part: "It's great to meet new and old friends, chew the fat, unwind, get inspired – and hung-over," said Moloney, and Wilkinson concurred: "Everyone has a common interest, yet different viewpoints lead to diverse, fascinating conversations."

This is exactly Glug's purpose, and Persson has big plans: "I want everyone to know everyone, and to work in a job that is fulfilling and inspiring," she beamed. "I hope people will use Glug as a platform to achieve this." ◻

Clockwise from far left: Glug's packed-out Summer Party took place at Cargo in Shoreditch, complete with beer garden and barbeque; stickers were provided to let others know if you're hiring or job-seeking; the obligatory VR demo.

DESIGNED FOR LIFE

HIDDEN HISTORIES

How publisher Occasional Papers is rebuilding interest in previously overlooked figures

Founded in 2008 by art historian Antony Hudek and graphic designer Sara De Bondt, Occasional Papers (OP) is a non-profit publisher committed to the more esoteric histories of architecture, art, design, film and literature.

Rejecting the text-light, white space-heavy aesthetic common to art monographs, OP's books delve deep into the 'why' and 'how', reflecting Hudek's background in art history and academia. Many of the publisher's titles focus on overlooked but influential figures in art and design. For example, the volume about concrete and sound poet Bob Cobbing (Boooook) contains extensive archival material that focuses on the artist's life and milieu as much as his output.

The depth of research and exquistite design (by De Bondt's own design studio) make each of the 20-plus books in OP's catalogue an art object in its own right, and many of them have led to a revival of interest in marginalised cultural figures.

Obscurity is not a prerequisite, though. OP is planning to reprint a collection of lectures, essays and letters by iconic graphic artsist Richard Hollis (About Graphic Design), while a new book on graphic design education is due to be published this autumn. ◼

www.occasionalpapers.org

Occasional Papers is offering a 15% discount for CA readers until 18th October. Use the code: COMPUTERARTS

Right: *A selection of OP titles, including Boooook, a celebration of Bob Cobbing (middle right and bottom).*
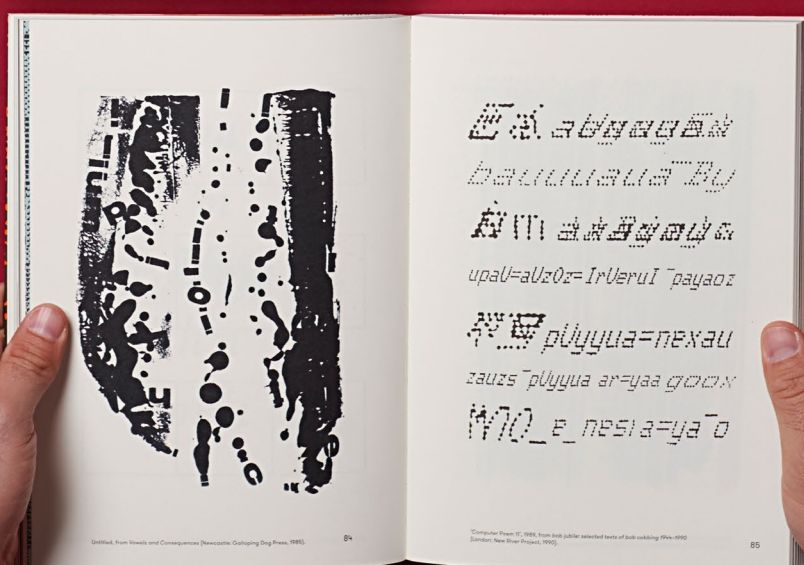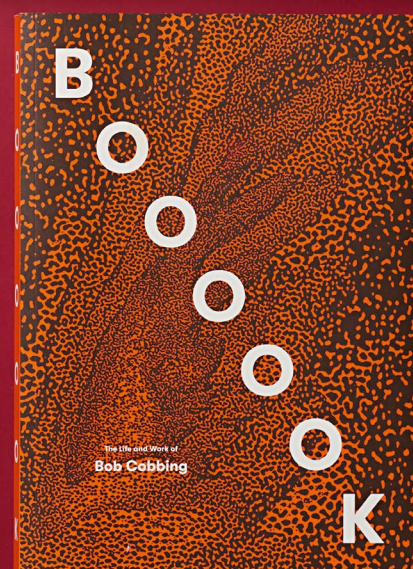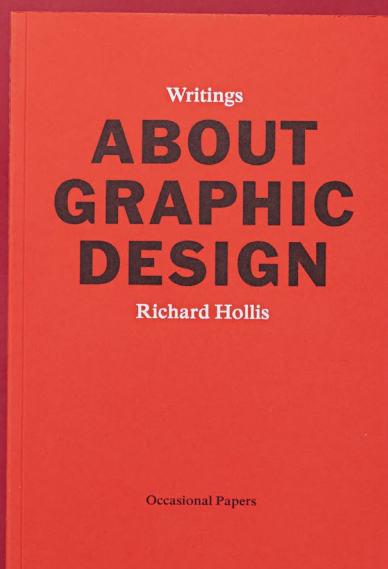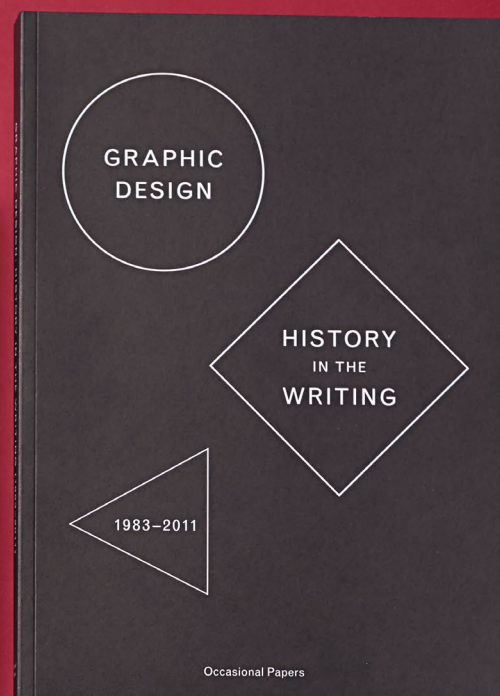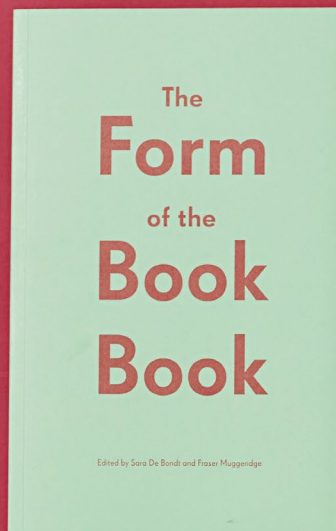
The
Form
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**Book
Book**

Edited by Sara De Bondt and Fraser Muggeridge

GRAPHIC
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1983–2011

Occasional Papers

Writings
**ABOUT
GRAPHIC
DESIGN**
Richard Hollis

Occasional Papers

B O O O O O O K

The Life and Work of
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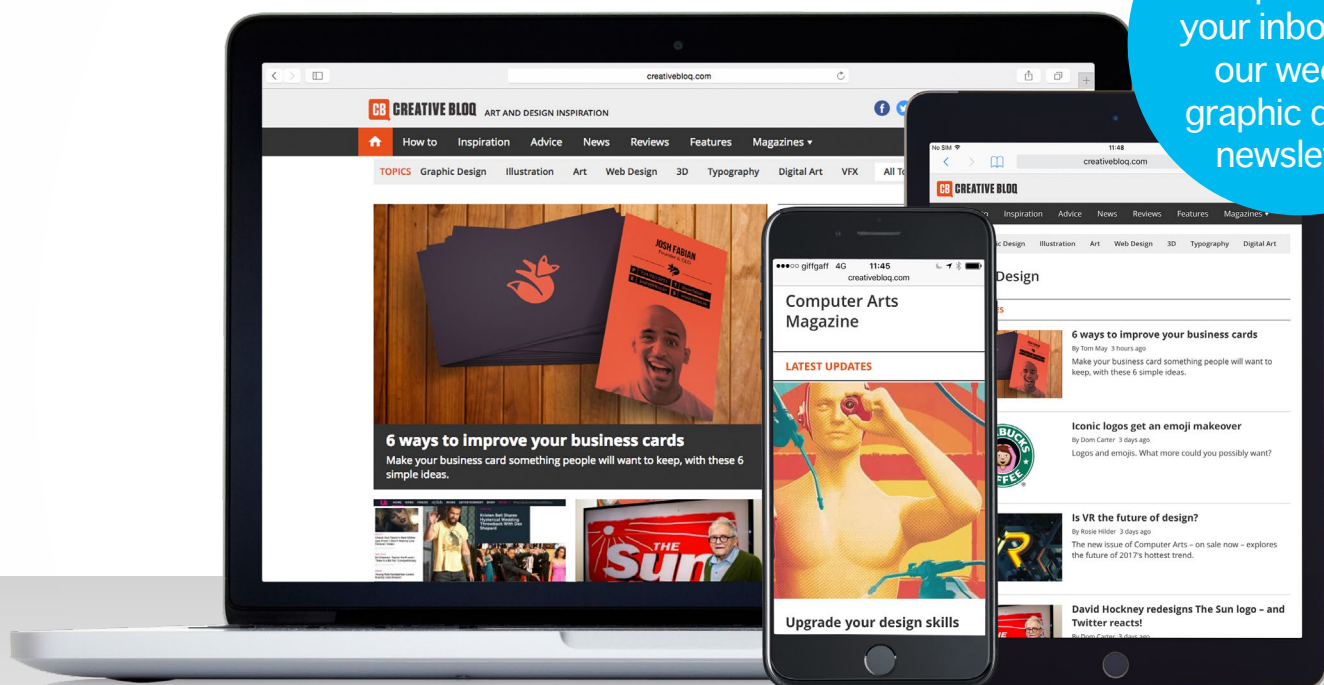
INSIGHT

Strong opinion and analysis from across global design industry

NEIL LEONARD
PROGRAMME LEADER, PLYMOUTH COLLEGE OF ART
www.plymouthart.ac.uk

Neil heads up the graphic design programme at Plymouth College of Art, but has previously taught everything from multimedia to model making to fashion journalism. He is also a practising creative, whose past clients include BT, Shell and Sony.

CHLOE TEMPLEMAN
DESIGN DIRECTOR, DESIGN BRIDGE
www.designbridge.com

Chloe is design director at Design Bridge, an independent brand design agency with studios in London, Amsterdam, New York and Singapore. On page 23, she discusses why she loves working with illustrators, and what makes a fruitful collaboration.

DESIGN MATTERS: What's the biggest obstacle to agency success?– page 22

PLUS: Three perspectives on loyalkaspar's reboot of SYFY's brand – page 24

Illustrations:
Louise Pomeroy
www.louisezpomeroy.com

ESSAY

Students should stop relying on software

Neil Leonard, programme leader at Plymouth College of Art, argues that graphic design courses should focus more on problem solving

E very summer in the UK, thousands of graphic design students graduate and start looking for jobs. It's a massively competitive market, so if a student wants to get the best job, they need to stand out from the crowd.

This need for graduates to rise above the pack brings about an exciting challenge for educators, and we are constantly trying to find the best way to help our students. My most successful graduates have not always been the most technically accomplished, but they have been ambitious, able to pitch, eager to talk about their work, and with a portfolio full of great ideas. While I understand software skills are necessary, and the industry corroborates this, it's important that educators prioritise ideas, a thorough knowledge of the principles of design, and a good sense of how to conduct research.

If you understand the principles of design, it should be easy to problem-solve a piece of software. For example, InDesign is a pretty intuitive piece of kit, but it's useless if you don't have a good understanding of grids, typography and visual composition. To gain knowledge of such principles, you don't need software, just an inquisitive mind and some time to do a bit of reading. Additionally, the skills learned through this problem solving can also be applied to other creative tasks, such as responding to a brief. Once you have a concept and know what you need to achieve, that is the time to pick up the right tool – this may be software, or something else.

The focus too many students have as they start graphic design degrees is to learn as much as possible about the associated software package. And while I would not discourage this, it needs to be just one part of a course's focus. I ask students if they would prefer to spend three years learning something that might be completely overhauled in a month – or worse still, become redundant (think of the decline in the use of Flash) – or would they rather focus on ideas, and knowledge that never dates?

I've worked with students that have spent inordinate amounts of time working through tutorials to give typography a wood effect in Photoshop, and then give it realistic lighting and shadows to make it look 'real'. Instead, I would propose spending 20 minutes in a woodwork studio and 20 more in a photography studio. Not only is the photographic approach quicker, but it will stand out more in a portfolio and show a greater sense of adventure and better problem solving.

If your projects are limited by the possibilities of the software you are using, the outcomes will never be innovative. Far too many portfolios look like a series of technical exercises, and this is missing the one thing the industry needs above anything else: great, innovative thinkers full of ideas.

So, where does this idea that graphic design can be broken down into several easy-to-learn components come from? From the earliest years in education, students are sold the notion of building blocks to success. If they can learn the right answers, they will pass the test and proceed. However, in the design industry, there is no right answer – just the one you have the confidence to pitch.

It's a seismic shift for some students, but educators need to encourage their cohorts to embrace not knowing answers immediately, and then show them how to problem-solve. But how does an educator teach students the skills necessary to thrive in design, such as adaptability, resilience, efficiency and innovation?

I would suggest that right from the first year, students should pitch, present and be encouraged to talk about their work as much as possible. Educators need to offer students as much access to the industry and live clients as possible. Real-world experience will help sharpen and focus a student's ambitions, and meeting a cross-section of the industry will help them find the roles they want to apply for later. Many students are not aware that graphic design employment goes further than the person sitting on a Mac using Photoshop; they do not know about copywriters, strategists or account managers.

While I do believe that graphic design courses should demonstrate the basics of each major software package (alongside offering inductions to Fab Labs, photography, sound recording, amongst other things), students can only innovate and show real ambition when they apply the skills they've learnt to solve real-world problems. ◻

Are new entrants to the industry too reliant on software? Tweet @ComputerArts using #DesignMatters

DISCUSSION

What's the biggest obstacle to success as an agency, and how do you overcome it?

DAN ROSE
Founder and creative director, Awesome
www.weare-awesome.co.uk

○

"Clients will most likely enquire about projects with several agencies when making the first contact for a quote. My advice is to avoid underpricing to win a bid: be honest, pitch with confidence and trust your work to speak for itself. A good client doesn't look for the cheapest option, only the right one. There's no worse situation than your team working more hours than you realistically budget for. This also puts your reputation on the line. By avoiding this route by pricing properly, you can produce quality, be more likely to generate further work, and the client will be able to accept your rates from the outset."

BOB SCHUSTER
Creative partner, Brevity
www.seekbrevity.com

○

"Where is the next project coming from? This is one of the most common and scariest questions on the business side of the creative industry. Before, we were a production-focused shop. All of our work was started and finished in about three months. It's really hard to plan for growth when you don't know if you'll be eating in a few months. We've since become more of a partner for a lot of our clients through monthly retainer work. This allows us to make more accurate projections, and to better serve our clients on a monthly basis, instead of one project at a time. We are still hungry to find more work, because the only way to overcome this obstacle is by working extremely hard and having a little faith."

BRAM BROERSE
Co-founder, Studio Airport
www.studioairport.nl

○

"When starting your own company, there are many obstacles to overcome. One of the biggest is that everything in this industry needs to be done fast. Right at the start, we chose to invest time in our studio and its projects. Rather than making a standard portfolio website, we took three months to design a custom one. Instead of multiple concurrent projects, we choose two and invest extra time to make them something we can be proud of, and set the tone for future clients. Make sure you're aware of each step and choice you make, even if it's the wrong one."

TWEET @COMPUTERARTS OR FIND US ON FACEBOOK

@DAV140
Obstacle: Getting your name known, aka branding. Solution: Getting work done. And doing that great work for great (even if small) clients.

@LUIS_IFEOLUWA7
The biggest obstacle to success is fear of failure. Courage and being persistent overcomes this.

WIL REYES
Consistent growth. Once you've grown to a certain point, it's easy to stagnate. Continuously looking to grow keeps you and your employees fresh.

DAVID MOODY
To be a jack of all trades, or a master of just one. The nerves set in when you turn down work because it doesn't fit with your studio ethos or specialism.

RADHIKA RANDAD
An uncooperative team can lead to missed deadlines and poor-quality work. One solution? Include someone who comes from a management background.

COLUMN

Why I love collaborating

Chloe Templeman, design director at Design Bridge, explains the fine art of successful collaboration

Working with different illustrators is part of my role at Design Bridge, and I find that these collaborations often help push our brand and packaging design projects in new directions, and bring a uniqueness to our work. Along the way, I'm learning that there's a fine art to a successful collaboration.

For starters, it's important to know when to approach an illustrator. I never begin a project with a particular illustrator in mind. Instead, at Design Bridge, we come up with the creative idea as a team and, as our idea takes shape, certain illustrators often come to mind. This means we can avoid the awkwardness of approaching someone too soon, only to find that our idea or approach has changed and we no longer need them.

When working on the Fortnum & Mason Christmas range, our idea was to conjure the magic and excitement of everyone coming together around the Christmas table for a sumptuous Fortnum's feast. I'd seen Kristjana S Williams' work previously on something I'd received through the post and thought, 'Yes! She'd be great for this.' Her eclectic style puts a modern twist on traditional woodblock techniques – perfect for expressing both a traditional and contemporary Fortnum's Christmas.

Bringing these kinds of individual styles to our work while ensuring the design is absolutely right for the brand is both fun and challenging. It's a balancing act, calling for constant communication, treating the illustrator as part of the team and truly working together.

We recently collaborated with Rob Bailey on a limited edition Smirnoff project to celebrate British Pride 2017. I've loved his work for years and was inspired by his piece Hey Man, which depicts two figures in a warm, loving embrace. Rob's style expressed the 'Choose Love' message of the project so well. It was a tight turnaround, so we had to work very closely to make sure that we remained true to both his style and the Smirnoff brand, producing work that would look great on the bottles, too.

Understanding the complementary skills that a designer and an illustrator bring to a project is also crucial to get the best out of a collaboration. We worked with Coralie Bickford-Smith for our Fortnum & Mason honey range. Her intricate book cover designs were perfect for our creative idea of labels inspired by postage stamps from far-flung corners of the world. I did some initial sketches based on her existing work and the practicalities of designing a label, which she then developed. It was a real labour of love, but working with Coralie was a dream for me as I collect her book covers.

I feel lucky to work on such amazing projects where we can bring an idea to life with the help of talented illustrators that I've often admired for years. Each project involves a lot of work, but an open, honest and truly collaborative approach ensures the best results every time. ◻

Who do you dream of collaborating with, and why? Tweet your thoughts to @ComputerArts using #DesignMatters and set the wheels in motion

REBRAND FOCUS

Focus on: SYFY

To celebrate SYFY's 25th birthday, loyalkaspar gave the TV channel's identity a total overhaul. We critique its new look…

DANIEL DÖRNEMANN
Executive creative director, loyalkaspar
www.loyalkaspar.com

JOE SNODGRASS
Visual designer, researcher and writer
www.geodesicworks.com

RAFAEL C ARMSTRONG
Packaging designer
www.rafaelarmstrong.com

"We wanted the new SYFY brand to be an editorial brand. One that – with a simple set of tools – can be agile and adapt and comment quickly in today's fast-paced media environment. We felt it was important to create a recognisable, simple and consistent typographic system that incorporates extreme flexibility, while letting the message take centre stage and drive decisions.

In addition to the new logo, we designed a pair of custom typefaces for the brand. We were joking that if the idea of an editorial is at the heart of the brand, typography is the blood that runs through it all, connecting all parts and every message back to SYFY."

"I was never a fan of the SYFY spelling change (from Sci Fi in 2009). It was trying too hard then, and it looks stupid and dated now. Getting used to seeing something, as we have with SYFY, doesn't make it a smart decision that shouldn't have been made in the first place, or later reversed.

The rebrand is about science fiction, and the new identity communicates that well. But SYFY's content actually spreads across a number of genres, sci-fi being just one of them. Even in the new commercial promos, the rebrand is true to the content and the fans. It features multi-genred 'nerds', not just science fiction junkies. SYFY's new identity should be speaking to the fans, who are diverse in their interests. The new identity should have mirrored the new programme lineup and been multi-dimensional and flexible."

"Refocusing on its identity and speaking to its core base is something that SYFY has needed to do for a while, and this visual pivot is definitely a step in the right direction. Although my knee-jerk reaction was: 'Again with a logo redesign?!' the design and accompanying updated visual language shows that it's taking steps in the right direction.

Gone is the curvy, purple type, and in its place we get a blocky stencil-like logo that would be as comfortable on the side of a spaceship as it would be on some underground lab doors. It's not a perfect solution or revision, but it is a step forward towards owning the sci-fi identity and wearing it with pride."
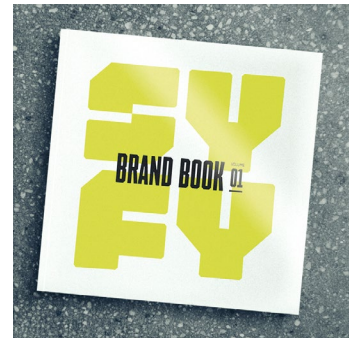
SYFY's new identity has been designed to "thrive across all platforms and formats". It has an adaptable, vibrant logo and two custom typefaces, including SYFY Hero (right), which picks up on the core characteristics of the new logo.

SYFY HERO: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ0123456789!?%&

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ0123456789!?%

iOS

Apple TV

Twitter

Facebook

Instagram

SHOWCASE

Computer Arts selects the hottest new design, illustration and motion work from the global design scene

NATURAL DESIGNS

REYKJAVIK FASHION FESTIVAL BRANDING
by Serious Business
www.seriousbusiness.agency

Munich-based agency Serious Business was asked to develop a new brand and direction for Reykjavik Fashion Festival that would better connect the event with Icelandic fashion designers, drawing global attention. Inspired by one of the festival's values, 'different by nature', the team looked to the country's raw, natural elements, choosing wind as the focus for the 2017 edition.

"We used visualisations of wind, and arrows, combined with pictures of the rough nature in Iceland throughout the identity," explains senior designer Thales Macedo. "The uniqueness of Iceland's nature allowed us to explore many interesting directions, while keeping the design modern and elegant."
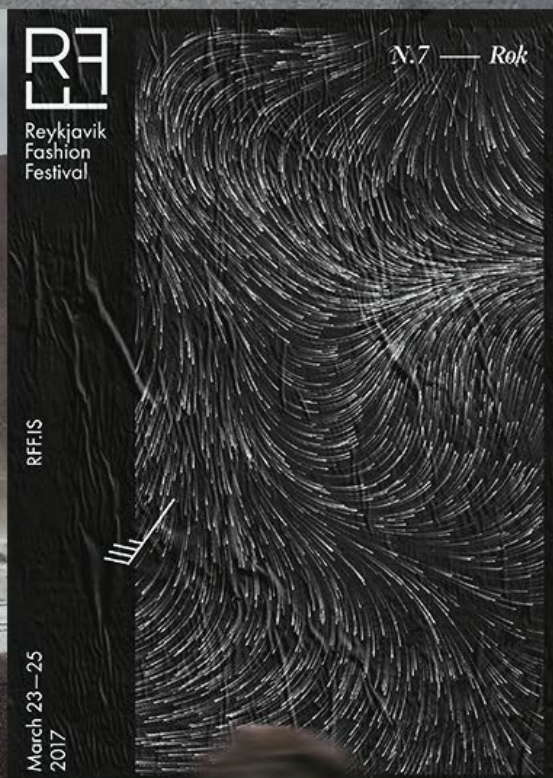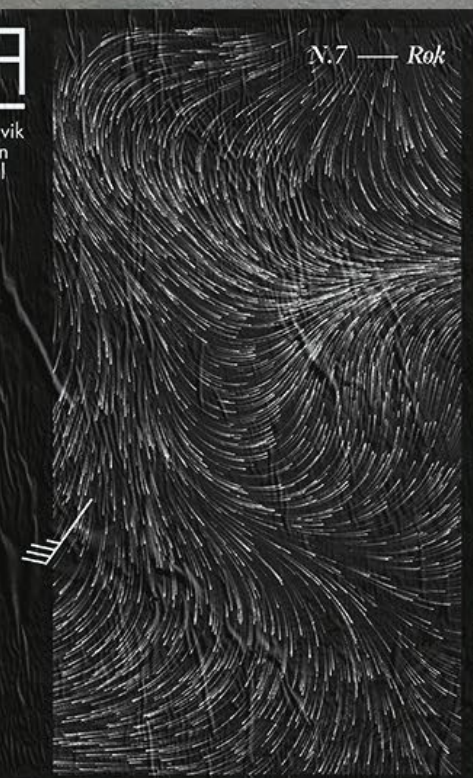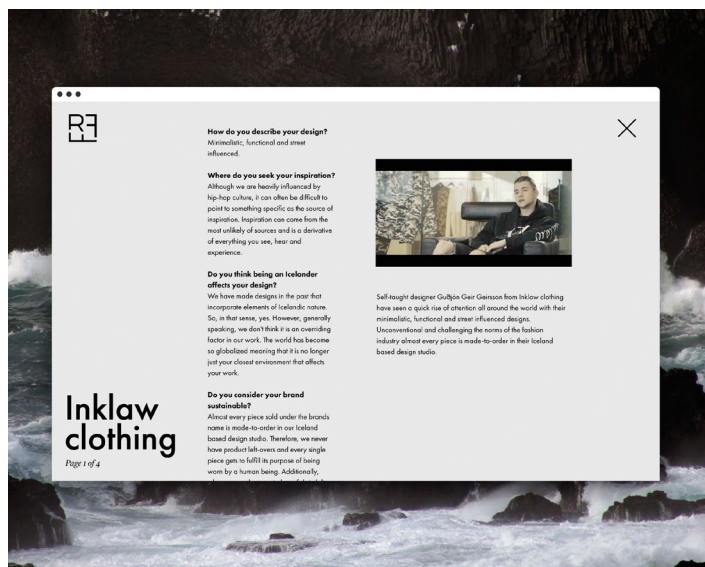
The logo acts as a framing device, highlighting the focus of the Reykjavik Fashion Festival.

Icelandic fashion designers and models were literally placed in the frame, launching them onto the world stage in the process.

For 2017, Serious Business focused on visualising wind, using arrows to denote both direction and movement.

Serious Business created a modern and elegant brand for the 2017 event, which extended online to the website design.

The identity uses raw natural elements to set the event apart from other fashion festivals.
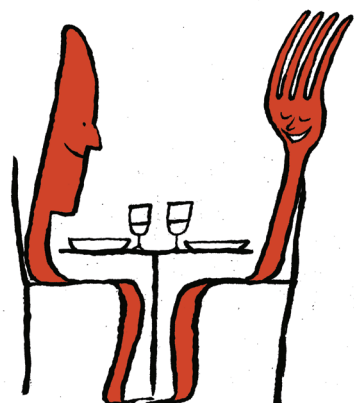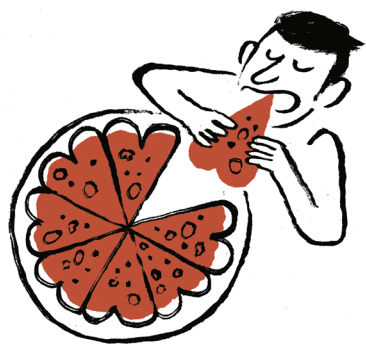
RICH ILLUSTRATIONS

THE CONNAUGHT MENUS
by Jean Jullien
www.jeanjullien.com

London-based design studio Otherway collaborated with French illustrator Jean Jullien to create a new identity for chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten's new restaurant at the capital's luxury Connaught Hotel. Menus, business cards, matchboxes and pizza boxes branded in gold foil all sport the new branding, while Jullien's illustrations bring a sense of playfulness to the identity.

This is the latest project to celebrate The Connaught's association with the art world. In a previous collaboration, The Partners worked with illustrator Kristjana S Williams on a stunning packaging range, winning a D&AD Wood Pencil and a Brand Impact Award in the process.

GREAT EXHIBITION OF THE NORTH

22 JUNE – SEPTEMBER 2018

HM Government

GREAT EXHIBITION OF THE NORTH

GREAT EXHIBITION OF THE NORTH

ART

CULTURE

DESIGN

INNOVATION
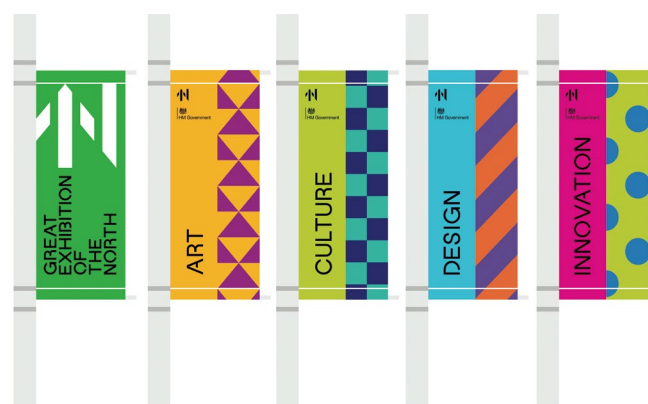
NORTHERN SOUL

GREAT EXHIBITION OF THE NORTH IDENTITY
by Build
http://studio.build

Leeds-based design agency Build created the identity for The Great Exhibition of the North, a £5 million government-led project that aims to celebrate the best of northern art, culture and design. The logo features a strong 'N' letter and a north-pointing arrow, representing people travelling up from the south of the country to attend the event.

"The mark was designed to sit by itself, or it can be filled with patterns for each of the four main categories that the

Great Exhibition will showcase: arts, culture, design and innovation," explains Build founder Michael C Place. "These four patterns have their own colour palette, and can be used on their own or mixed with the other category patterns."

One of the main objectives of the brief was to make sure the branding would appeal to a range of people. "From families to corporate sponsors, the event will attract a wide demographic and we wanted to make sure it feels inclusive," adds Place.

FRAMING CREATIVITY

REEVES REBRAND
by Pearlfisher
www.pearlfisher.com

With an identity that had remained largely intact for 250 years, heritage arts and crafts brand Reeves turned to Pearlfisher for a refresh. "The brief was to create a new brand vision, identity and visual language that would organise the complex portfolio of Reeves products into one that is simple, navigable, inspiring and relevant to millennials, for whom creativity is instinctual – a way of life – as opposed to a skill that is good or bad, right or wrong," explains Jess Phillips, senior designer at Pearlfisher.

The new brand identity is characterised by a cleaner typeface, colourful coding system and bold wordmark in which the 'R' evokes a framed corner. "The most challenging part was ensuring the colours and design could be consistently printed and produced by all of the many suppliers we were working with," adds Phillips. "The new brand identity and global design system frames a new future for Reeves."
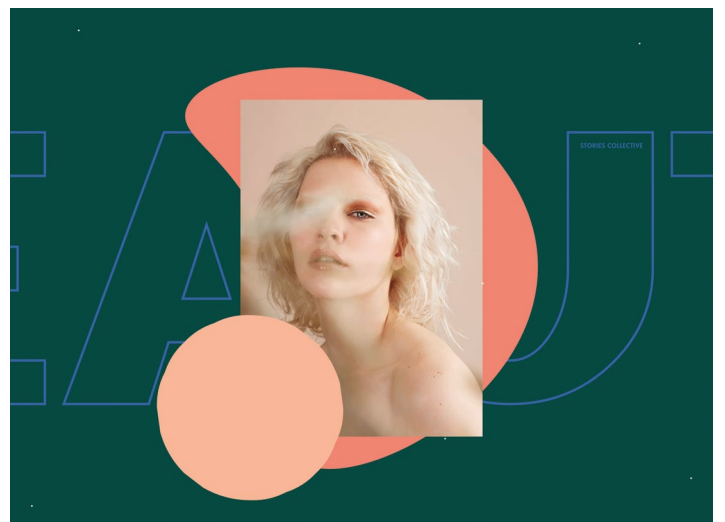
COLOUR EXTRAVAGANZA

STORIES COLLECTIVE EDITORIAL
by Caterina Bianchini Design
www.caterinabianchini.com

Online platform Stories Collective features fashion, art and lifestyle editorial projects. For the Beauty March series, art director and designer Caterina Bianchini was tasked with using colour and graphic imagery to bring the layouts to life.

"I wanted to create layouts that would look extreme against the simple minimalist photography," she explains. "The juxtaposition of hyper-colour spreads against a nude and minimalistic photographic style creates an unusual and unlikely balance."

Bianchini also took a playful, expressive approach to the typography. "It reflects feeling. I think this project has charisma, and that comes through being free with the design," she says.
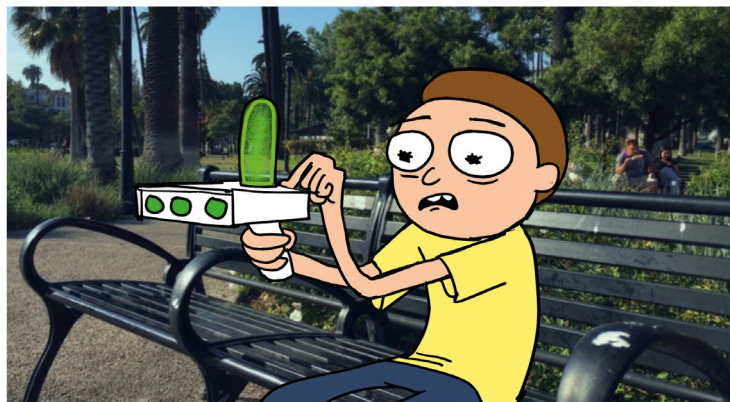
ACID-FUELLED FRENZY

RICK AND MORTY EXQUISITE CORPSE
by Titmouse
www.titmouse.net

Animation production company Titmouse marked the return of cult animation series Rick and Morty with a gloriously trippy trailer created by 22 talented animators. Directed by Titmouse's Matt Taylor, the short stitches show a huge variety of different animation styles and media.

"In terms of aesthetic, I was interested in having the purest representation of each artist come through," says Taylor. "So it was important to give each artist full freedom to come up with their own look for the characters as well as their own idea."

Given the project's very tight deadline constraints, there was no time to pass one completed segment to the next artist – so Taylor's biggest challenge was figuring out how all the segments would connect. "The key to it all was storyboards," he says. "I used those to piece together a path. Then we had each artist design the final frame of their segment to pass along."
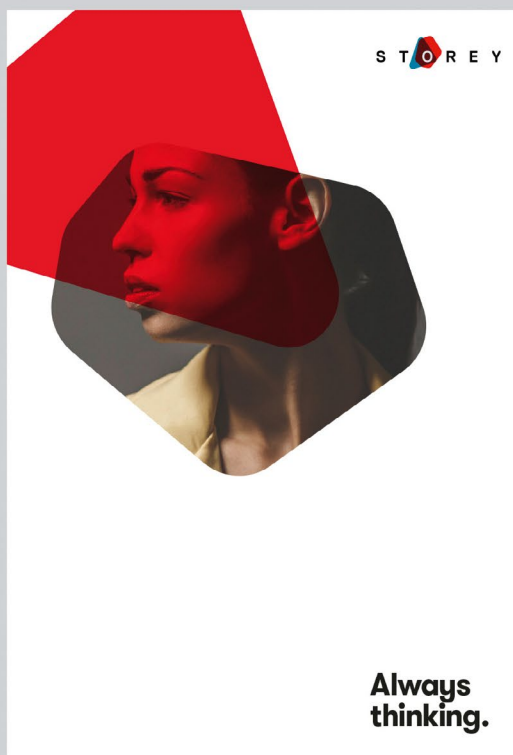
SHARING STORIES
STOREY IDENTITY
by DixonBaxi
www.dixonbaxi.com

Commissioned to create an identity for a new flexible workspace brand from British Land, brand consultancy DixonBaxi developed a new name – Storey – and a branding system based around the concept of 'modular flexibility'. "Amongst many points of reference, a 'tangram' puzzle became a metaphor for this: infinite permutations from a simple set of shapes," explains ECD Aporva Baxi.

Storey provides office space in London for companies that have outgrown co-working spaces, and the brand seeks to challenge convention within office renting. "From the outset, there was an ambition to flip convention," continues Baxi, adding that the firm undertook a four-week design sprint process to refine the new identity. "The direction expresses the idea of flexibility with a simple, effective visual metaphor, coupled with a distinct tone of voice and photography that focuses on people and the stories of their businesses."
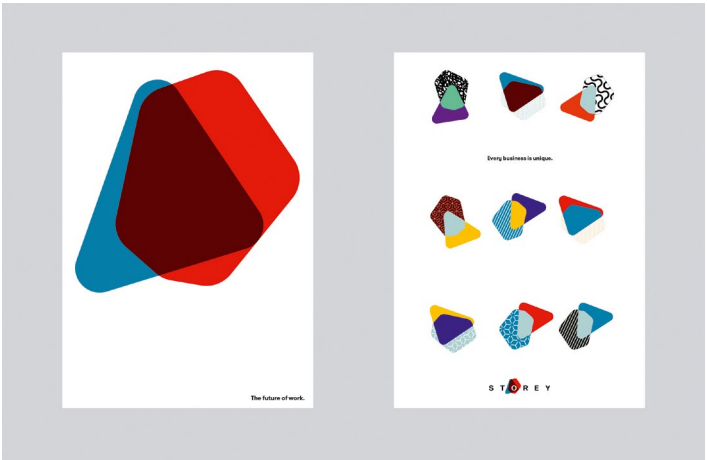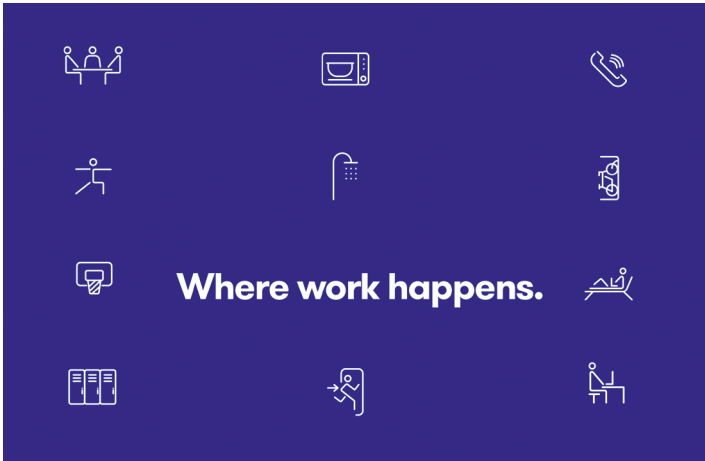
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STOREY

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British Land

Welcome

STOREY

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STOREY

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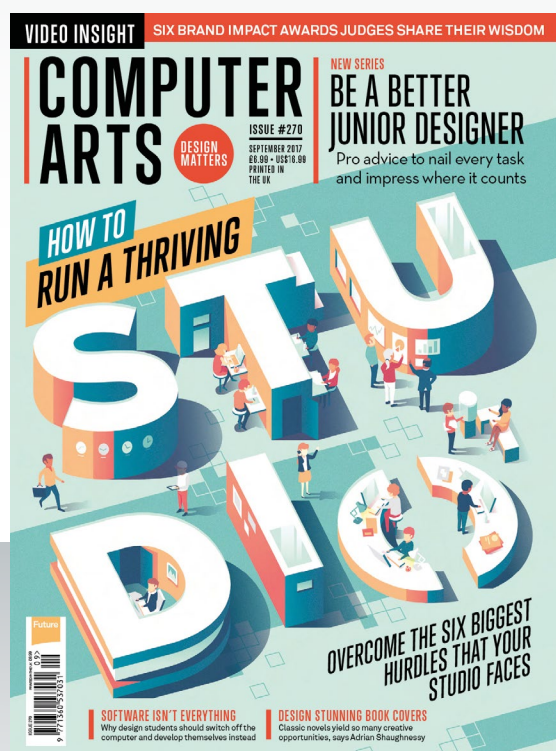
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HOW TO BUILD A THRIVING STUDIO

Running a small creative business can be a joy and a privilege, but it's certainly not a walk in the park. **Tom May** discusses the six major challenges that studios face, and how best to tackle them

ILLUSTRATION: Guillaume Kurkdjian www.guillaumekurkdjian.com

1 RECRUIT THE BEST

Find out how to tempt talent away from large agencies, and hold onto new recruits

1 FOCUS ON JUNIORS

As a small creative business, it's often easier to recruit juniors with potential and then develop them than to find fully formed talent. The Plant London is one agency that likes to nurture from below, according to founder Matt Utber. "One student who came straight to us from university ended up becoming our design director," he recalls. "And we've had a few others over the years who've done similar things. It's really lovely to nurture designers and see them grow like this."

2 DRAW ON EXISTING FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

Friendship groups and existing contacts are another great way to find new talent. At SteadyGo, the Leeds agency he co-founded, Tom Wade tried running a recommendation policy for recruitment: "If an existing employee introduced a friend we'd pay them £250, or donate it to a charity. Quite a lot of people did the latter, which was nice." And the benefits of using friendship networks aren't just about getting in good people, he adds. "Recruiting this way has led to a very friendly atmosphere. Everyone has these connections that transcend day-to-day agency life."

"IT'S REALLY LOVELY TO NURTURE DESIGNERS AND SEE THEM GROW"
MATT UTBER

Matt is founder and creative director of The Plant London. Launched in 2004, the design and branding agency has built an impressive folio of work. Clients including Jamie Oliver, Tropicana, London Fashion Week, CNN Style and Art HK. www.theplant.co.uk

3 AVOID USING RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

The sentiment of our panel was that recruitment agencies are best left as a last resort. Not only are they expensive, but they're not always reliable. "Once we hired someone the agent had vetted and who interviewed okay, but had a CV that turned out to be complete fiction," remembers Alec East, founder of Bedford agency Narrative Industries. "Recruitment fees are pretty big when you're on the salaries we pay, and yet the work this guy did was so bad that in the end it wasn't actually billable."

4 GET OUT THERE AND MEET PEOPLE

Updating LinkedIn is not enough to find the right talent. You have to physically venture out into the community, believes Joe Cecere of Minneapolis agency Little & Company. "Our philosophy is that we're always connecting and getting out there, talking to people," he explains. "We're speaking at events, we're going to student portfolio shows. This keeps our name known. We use our network of employees and their past experience to keep in contact with people all around the country. So when opportunities come up, we're able to bring people in."

"WE'RE ALWAYS CONNECTING AND GETTING OUT THERE, TALKING TO PEOPLE"

JOE CECERE

Joe is president of Little & Company, a branding and design firm in Minneapolis founded in 1979. Through the company's history, it has partnered with big name clients such as Target, Gap, Microsoft, Sealy, Lowe's, Frito-Lay, Medtronic and American Craft Council.
www.littleco.com

5 JOIN ORGANISATIONS

Joining professional organisations can seriously widen your recruiting net, says Utber. "Being part of YCN, a small collection of agencies and clients, has been very good in helping us find talent." Check out local associations too, adds East. "Here in Bedfordshire, recruitment is more difficult than in London, so I got involved in Bedford Creative Arts. Part of their remit is to provide creative networking events, and they've proved very useful with freelancers or special commissions."

6 CREATE THE RIGHT STUDIO CULTURE

Create the right studio culture, and recruiting and retaining your staff becomes far easier. That's certainly been the case at Chicago design agency 50,000feet, says Jim Misener. "Being a small business means we've been able to develop an incredibly collaborative – almost collectivist – culture," he explains. "We keep the hierarchy as flat as possible, and this has contributed to our ability to attract and retain talent, with many citing the environment, culture and an ability to make a difference within their teams, practices, and the agency overall as reasons for joining and staying."

2 KEEP WINNING NEW WORK

Keep your business afloat by constantly winning new work and clients

1 SPECIALISE

If you're a large agency, clients expect you to do everything, from marketing to branding through to web design and app development. Small agencies can't compete with that – and nor should they, says East. "When we first started, we'd take almost any job that came our way. But once we recognised what we did best and what we enjoyed the most, it became easier to specialise. This, in turn, made it easier to identify new business opportunities and win them."

2 BE PROACTIVE

Small agencies often get work via word of mouth, but you can't rely on that, argues Utber. "You need to be proactive. Personally I always do one thing a day. Make a phone call or reconnect to someone." It's also about getting your name out there. "We believe that

raising our profile is a great way to attract clients, so we're writing a lot more thought pieces, and doing a lot more talks and panels."

3 CHOOSE YOUR WORK

For new Manchester agency BGN, chasing new business is all about going after the right type of work, says founder Antonio Giansante. "We've got a clear vision of the type of client we want, so that's what we're chasing. We've been building up a campaign to target that sector including a mixture of stuff: sponsoring some awards and events, print advertising, digital advertising, some social stuff, attending events, and some old-school DM."

4 AVOID SEARCH FIRMS

Traditional ad agencies often use a search or pitch firm to generate leads. But our panel generally sees that as an outdated model that's too expensive for a small agency. "We went through a phase of working with a lead generation agency, where people would cold call for us," recalls Wade. "But it cost quite a lot per month – pretty much one person's wage. And I wouldn't say the results were exactly amazing…"

5 HARNESS SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be a useful tool to find new clients, says Wade. "At SteadyGo, I used the Twitter app Tweetdeck to serve me up tweets containing words from a list of 20 that were relevant to our business. I found quite a lot of work that way, and it made it easier to pick the kind of clients we wanted."

6 SORT YOUR LEGAL STATUS

One of the biggest questions freelancers have is whether to trade as a company or as an individual. The main factor that persuaded Dan Hett, a creative technologist and digital artist from Manchester, to register himself as a company was that it opened more doors. "I've got a couple of very large clients that I know won't deal with people who aren't set up as companies," he says. "So for me, it was important I be registered as a company."

3 KEEP HOLD OF YOUR CLIENTS

Discover how to hang on to your clients and stop them defecting to rival companies

1 CREATE A SENSE OF TRUST

Beyond quality work, delivered in a timely manner, the main thing that will keep clients on side is trust and understanding. When you only have a small number of employees, that can be easier to achieve than in a huge, impersonal organisation, so make the most of it, says Wade. "Predominantly, it's about a shared sense of what the brand needs, its trajectory, its future and becoming a genuine partner. Pursue that, as we did at SteadyGo, and you'll end up with a lot of long-term clients as a result."

2 PROVIDE CONSISTENCY

Clients like consistency, and that's another thing you should be better positioned to provide as a small business. "In a big company, a client may get shifted through four designers through the progress of the work," points out Cecere. "Or they may have an account director for six months, and then get a new one all of a sudden. In contrast, at Little & Company, you get a dedicated team that stay with you. We have decades-long relationships because of those strong bonds."

3 RECOGNISE YOU BOTH WANT THE SAME THINGS

Just as you want a long-term relationship with a client, remember that they also want a long-term relationship with you. This came into sharp focus for Giansante this year

"CLIENTS WANT TO ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE, AND IT'S UP TO US TO MAKE SURE THEY DO"
JOHN SPENCER

John is founder and creative director of Offthetopofmyhead, a small 'virtual agency' in Middlesex. His clients have included Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sadler's Wells Theatre, Terrence Higgins Trust, Royal College of Nursing and The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.
www.offthetopofmyhead.co.uk

4 STAY ON TOP OF IT

Get a firm hold on studio management, project management and cashflow

when BGN was launched. He made it clear to each client that cashflow was crucial in these early days. "And everyone's responded well and paid on the dot," he says. "They were all saying: 'We want to help you through it.' So it's always important to remember that these relationships work both ways."

4 BE A GOOD LISTENER

Often, a client will come to a small agency because they feel that bigger companies don't listen to them, or have time for them. So don't disappoint. "At 50,000feet, great communication begins by listening," says Misener. "Then, we focus on executing on clients' specific challenges – quickly and beautifully. We approach every client interaction from a service-minded standpoint: what insight can we share, what inspiration can we offer, what confidence can we instill and what trust can we build."

5 BE PERSONABLE

One thing people like about small creative businesses is that they're generally more easy-going and personable than big companies, so use that to your advantage, says John Spencer, founder of Middlesex agency Offthetopofmyhead. "I think you dramatically improve your chances by being approachable and friendly," he explains. "Nobody wants to deal with an agency if they're full of their own importance – and there are plenty of these agencies around. Clients want to enjoy the experience, and it's up to us to make sure they do."

6 MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

Even if you do everything possible right, don't expect every client to stay with you forever, says Utber. "There's natural attrition as well. When you work on a project basis, once the brand is developed, the client will often find someone in-house or a less expensive agency to handle things. That's very much a fact of life." So build in that expectation to your projection and if it happens, don't dwell too much on it. If you're always finding new clients, then losing old ones shouldn't hurt as much.

1 MAKE CASHFLOW KING

"Cashflow is the main downfall for small creative businesses," says Giansante. Yet making sure that there's always cash in the bank to pay for everything is a big task, and easily forgotten amongst the more 'fun' aspects of agency work."So as well as using tools like Xero, I've got a budget spreadsheet on my screen 24/7," he says. "Everything we spend on a daily basis goes in there and I keep constant track."

2 BE RUTHLESS

In a small business, the person responsible for keeping clients happy

*"IT'S A REALLY
FINE LINE
BETWEEN
HAVING TOO
LITTLE WORK
AND TOO MUCH"*

ANTONIO GIANSANTE

*Antonio is founder and operations director
of BGN, a new strategic, brand-led agency
in Manchester. He's part of a tight-knit team
of six with 46 years of creative agency
experience between them.
www.bgn.agency*

may also be the person who needs to
chase client payments, yet that can be
problematic. "We don't like talking
about money, it's a very British thing,"
says East. "But you need to get over
that, or you may end up in trouble.
Of course, you need to have proper
payment systems, but beyond that it's
largely a communication issue: you
need to keep talking to clients about
money, as well as everything else."

3 CREATE AN 'ALL HANDS ON DECK' CULTURE

In a small business, everyone
must be willing to pitch in with
administrative tasks, believes Cecere.
"We do have people that manage core
areas of our business, but we're also
a 25-person firm, so we talk about
wearing a lot of hats," he says. "Even
if you're a leader in a certain area, no
one is too big to do any kind of task.
People help each other out; we all roll
up our sleeves when we need to."

4 LEARN WHEN TO DELEGATE

When you're a small business, you
can keep costs down by handling
administrative tasks yourself. "But
sometimes that's a false economy, and
it's important to recognise where your
energies are best spent," says East. "We
got a great bookkeeper after about two
years and it was worth the cost, because
she gave us so much more information
about cashflow and we could do
projections. So as with design, these

*"BY MINDING
THE STORE,
WE CREATE A
SUSTAINABLE
AND CREATIVE
ENVIRONMENT"*

JIM MISENER

*Jim is president and managing
director of Chicago-based
50,000feet. The agency works
with clients including FedEx,
Harley-Davidson, Mastercard,
Sony, McDonald's and AIGA
on compelling communications
across all media, including
broadcast, print and interactive.
www.50000feet.com*

things are often best left to someone
who knows what they're doing."

5 MANAGE WORKFLOW

It's the kind of problem everyone wants
to have, but being over rather than
under capacity can still be a serious
problem for a small studio. "It's a really
fine line between having too little work
and too much," points out Giansante.
"But that's one of the biggest challenges
you can have on the project
management side, to strike that
balance. It's hard to say no to work from
a cash point of view, but there are other
options, like outsourcing to a pool of
trusted freelancers."

6 REVIEW EVERYTHING YOU DO REGULARLY

With the constant hustle and bustle
of agency work, it's easy to forget to
take a step back and examine how
things are going. But it's vital for the
health of the company to do so, argues
Misener. "We begin the week with a
careful review of finance, operations,
staffing and marketing across the entire
business, developing a list of of goals for
the week, along with any issues that we
need to address," he says. "By minding
the store, we create a sustainable and
creative environment."

5 ESTABLISH GOOD WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Retain your staff by offering them the right balance of work and play

1 FACILITATE GOOD COMMUNICATIONS

The biggest cause of workplace stress is poor communication and bad planning, says East. As a small business, those problems should in theory be easier to overcome than in a huge bureaucracy, but this won't happen automatically. You need to make the effort to be clear with your employees. "You need to ask difficult questions, be realistic about what's achievable, be willing to say you don't know (but can find out), and have good processes and workflows in place," says East. "Sort this out and most of the problems melt away."

2 KEEP WORKING HOURS REALISTIC

People working for small companies are often asked to work long hours, and often end up doing so, but that can be counterproductive, lowering productivity and encouraging staff churn. So how can you avoid too many late nights or weekends stuck in the office? "Once you're experienced enough to know how long things take, you set realistic timelines," Utber says. Then it's a case of communicating these timelines. "We find clients are very happy to let you take the lead on that, as long as you clearly tell them how long things will take. As a result, we very rarely work long hours."

3 BE FLEXIBLE

With a small business, you generally have more freedom to be flexible with staff than large organisations with a rigid HR department. And this can go a long way to making employees happier and more productive. "So while we have regular office hours," says Cecere, "if you want to be home one day, you can do that. If you want to go to a coffee shop and work, you can do that. If your kid has a baseball game, go do that."

4 OFFER REMOTE WORKING

Offering your staff the possibility of remote working is another way to keep them on side. Giansante offers two examples. "One lad at BGN is working a day or two a week, following the recent birth of his new baby. And our creative director has got small children,

so he leaves at 5pm every day, but then he'll probably work 9 to 11pm at home. If you can fit work around people's lives, it can really make the difference to work-life balance."

5 THINK ABOUT LOCATION

One of the worst things about being an employee is having a long or unpleasant commute, so minimising the negative effects of that can be a great way to improve employees' work-life balance. "We're always on the lookout for ways to improve the lives and livelihoods of our staff," says Cecere. "Regarding commuting, we chose to locate our offices where there is easy public transportation from all directions, free parking, the ability to cycle, and for an increasing number of our staff, the ability to walk to work."

6 KEEP THE HIERARCHY FLAT

One of the best ways to keep employees happy is to make them feel that as a business, you're all striving together, towards a common goal. There's no scientific method or step-by-step plan for making this happen, says Wade, but having a flat hierarchy can help. "At SteadyGo, we all had the same perks, staff and directors; we always kept things very flat as far as people were treated. And that led to a feeling of 'we're all in it to win it'."

6 INVEST WISELY

Make better decisions when it comes to office space and equipment

1 LOCATION ISN'T EVERYTHING

When it comes to office space, new agencies often start small and cheap. "We started in a craphole," recalls Wade. "It looked like a taxi office. Really cheap rates and a shared kitchen between 300 people. But it was nice, it felt like grass roots." Later the team upgraded, but he still doesn't feel that boutique agencies necessarily need expensive city-centre offices. "What you need is to create kickass work and some great clients; that's more important than the postcode," he insists.

2 DO YOU NEED AN OFFICE?

Does your studio actually need a traditional office? Hett runs a one-man business as a creative technologist and digital artist, and works out of an art studio. "Although it's more bare bones in terms of space, it's a lot cheaper than even renting a single desk in a shared office," he says. "It's literally just a white cube, but so far it's working for me."

3 AVOID FALSE ECONOMIES

When you start a business, you need to be frugal, but don't want to take things too far, says East. "Any sizeable expense requires a cost-benefit analysis. If someone can work better, faster or easier with a certain piece of kit, then they can be more productive and generate more revenue."

4 LEASE DON'T BUY

To make sure your staff have the latest kit, consider leasing instead of buying,
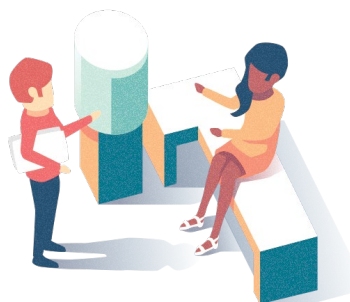
> ## "AN ART STUDIO MIGHT PROVE CHEAPER THAN RENTING A SINGLE DESK IN A SHARED OFFICE"
> *DAN HETT*

Dan is a BAFTA-winning creative technologist and digital artist. Last year he left his job at the BBC to set up his one-man business, working for clients including BBC Children's, BBC R&D, Sky and Tate Liverpool. www.danhett.com

recommends Giansante. "If we had to buy six brand new Macs for everyone, we'd be looking at around twenty grand's worth of stuff, so we lease everything. Being able to budget and spread that across the next 24 months is perfect: I know exactly how much I'm paying. Everyone gets a brand new computer and if it breaks, it gets fixed at no extra cost."

5 LISTEN TO YOUR STAFF

As a small business, you have the opportunity to talk to your staff, so take it, advises Misener. "Our approach has always been to listen to staff regarding what hardware and software they need and then develop a customised plan across the team. It's always about being attentive and being willing to adapt to new innovations, work habits, or client and staff needs."

6 BRING THE FUN

Sometimes it's a good idea to spend a little money on things that aren't strictly necessary. "It's important to work in a space you enjoy," says Spencer. "So a bloody good sound system and a cappuccino machine are essential. It's also worth spending a little more on art, photography and design books and magazines. They're invaluable for keeping up with what's going on." ◻

NEXT MONTH

DIVERSITY IN DESIGN
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MAGIC EYE

Known for her intricate blends of type and texture, **Hansje van Halem** believes that originality can often be found in complexity

HANSJE VAN HALEM_ Passionate about typography, book design and print in all its forms, Hansje van Halem has run her own studio in Amsterdam since 2003. She also works digitally, creating intricate typographic experiments that explore the tension between a systematic approach, legibility, and irregularity, as well as lecturing and leading creative workshops. www.hansje.net

◾ WORDS: Nick Carson PHOTOGRAPHY: Isabella Rozendaal

Fascinated by the interplay between pattern, texture and typography, Hansje van Halem has developed a distinctive style that bridges the gap between digital and print to suit her needs – she's as comfortable generating striking visuals with code as she is experimenting with screenprint and Riso.

The Dutch designer will cross the border to Belgium in November to speak at Antwerp's Us By Night festival – to whet your appetite, we chatted to van Halem about the style and substance of her work…

Textures and geometric patterns are a major part of your work. How did you develop your technique?
The first time I drew textures was when I tested my Wacom tablet in 2002. It was a new phenomenon – having my hand draw 'inside' the computer was mesmerising.

For years, I drew manually on the computer. Click by click, stroke by stroke, I created letters, and sometimes wandered off and let the texture of the letters grow into a pattern. A digital handicraft.

It was during a holiday that I grabbed a fineliner to draw. I'd been drawing digitally for six years, and was in need of more organic forms. After scanning the drawings, I was able to organise them on the computer. I missed the editing options that I had when drawing digitally, like changing the stroke or connecting open lines.

How do you choose the right tools for the job – do you stay up to date with the latest developments?
For a while, I went for all the tools that were presented: I counted the days until the Wacom Inkling (2011) was released – a ballpoint that kept track of its strokes by a tracking device. Or the Cintiq (2012), where I could draw directly on the screen. Both turned out to disappoint me. On the other hand, I had got used to hand-eye coordination being separated by drawing on my tablet.

My Illustrator skills improved. Rather than drawing 100 lines, I could generate them using the effects provided. For years, I explored the limits of the software, adding external plug-ins to save time and provide me with more options.

Currently, I've had one of my type treatments – for which I would follow an labour intensive recipe in Illustrator – written as a Python script in Drawbot by programmer Just van Rossum. By altering the parameters and running the script, I get the artwork. I can even render it as an animation.

Walk us through the relationship between the patterns you create, and your letterforms. What role do systems and automation play here?
I offered to design the posters for a series of exhibitions by artist-led organisation Galerie Block C. Over the course of 18 posters – first screenprinted, later Riso printed – I've explored different combinations of typography and background.

I've always had difficulty with placing text over a background. And only placing letters on a piece of paper seems empty to me. A logical consequence is to merge background and typography into one.

One approach for that is to try and find a system for it. Dividing the paper into squares; cutting the letters into halves; cutting letter shapes out of a grid; morphing shapes and/or connecting lines. Contrast, stroke width, line density and colour all have to co-operate to fool the eye into reading letters.

When I only create patterns, the game still has to follow similar rules, but which shape has to be read is not predetermined because no one should recognise a letter shape in it. Still, I'd like the eye to get confused, and want to establish some kind of colour and shape definition.

Your typography is often warped, distorted and quite abstract. How important is legibility?
Legibility is key! I never make typographic work to be illegible, but I do like to play with it. If my type treatment is too legible, then I consider it to be overdone or under designed. Then I have to emphasise the structure, loosen the density or reinvent a different treatment. When I embrace the fact that legibility stops, an abstract pattern begins.

I love to play with distance: the fact that something looks abstract from up close, and legible from further away, keeps puzzling me.

I was talking to my good friend and designer Michiel Schuurman, who is a great influence. Recently ▶

Below: Hansje van Halem creates the exhibition posters for artist-run Galerie Block C "as a gift to the gallery". She uses the artist's name as a shape for experimenting with background and type.
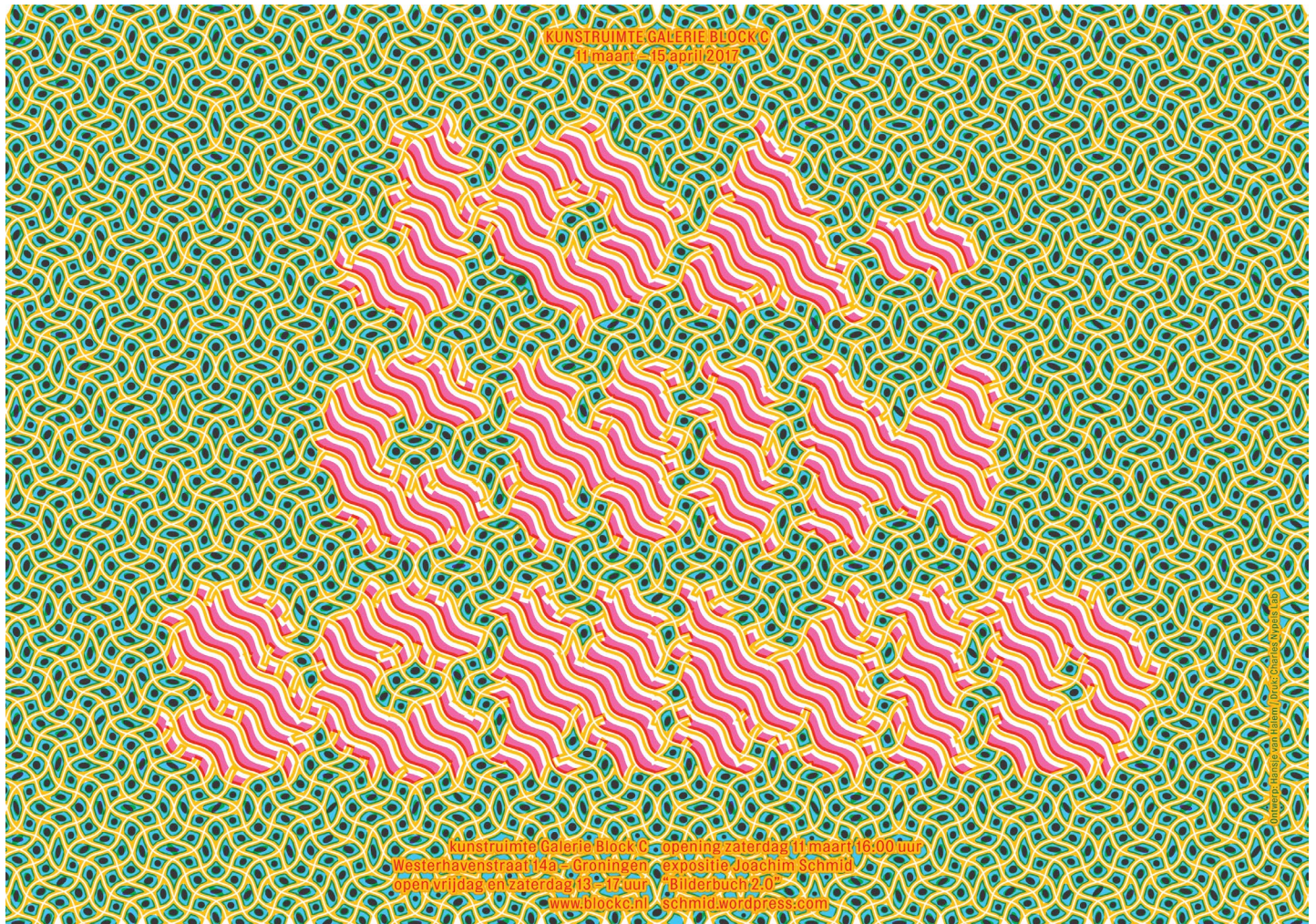
Above and left: More of van Halem's posters for Galerie Block C. The artists don't see the designs until they return from the printers.
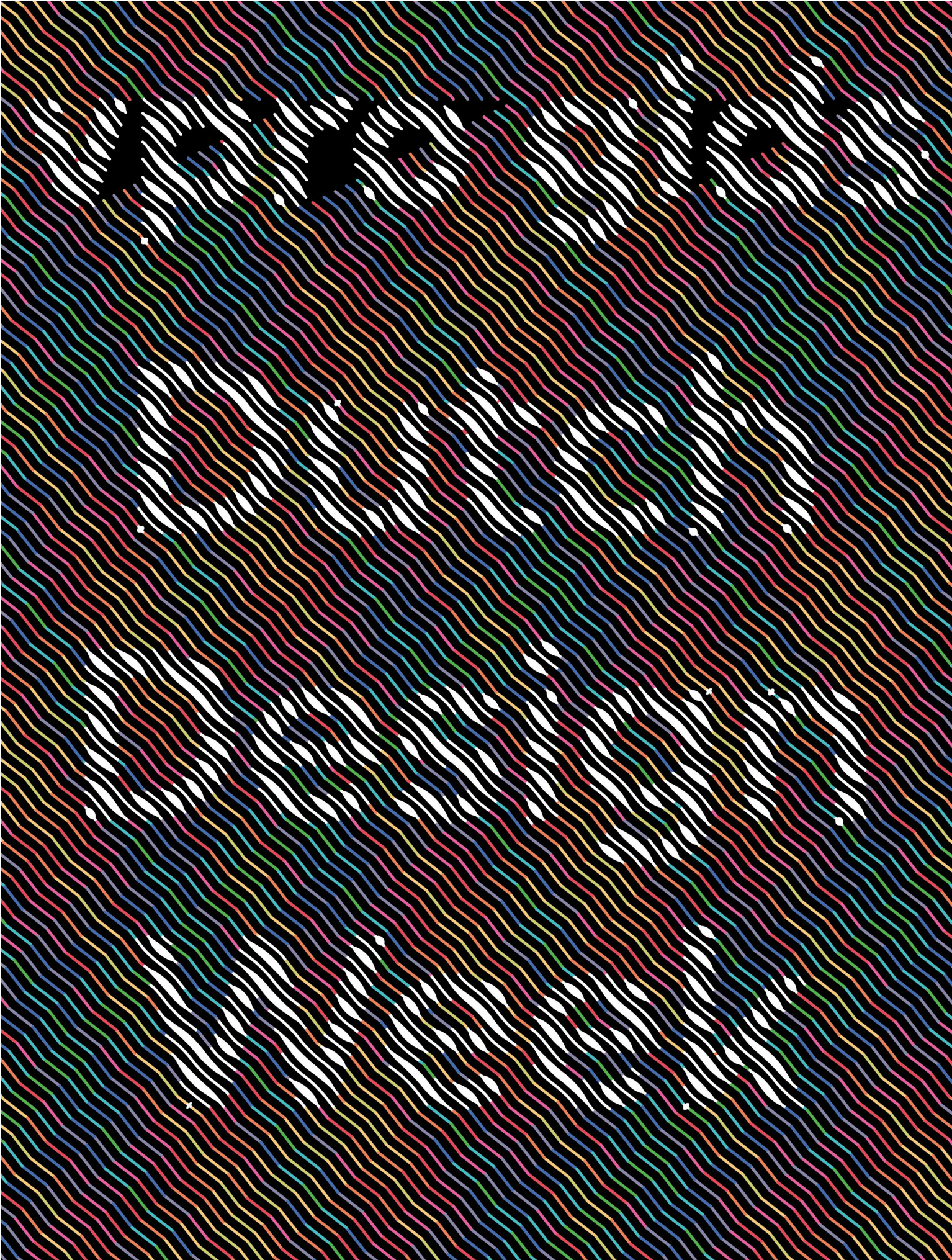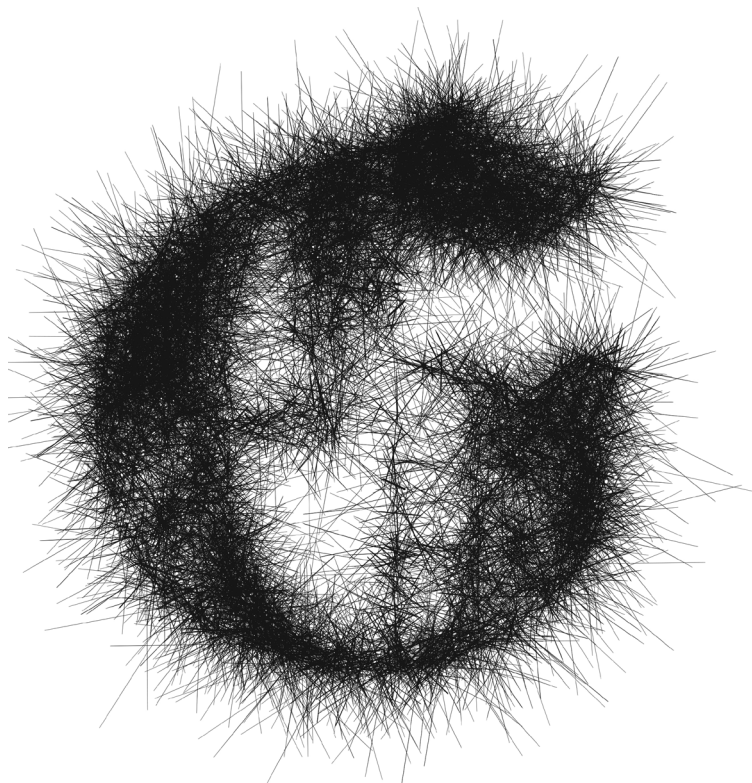
Left: van Halem created vector drawings and renderings for the cover of broadcasting company vpro's TV guide.

Above: A logo treatment for the oldest Dutch literary magazine, De Gids.

Above right: van Halem's gift for her boyfriend, a vector drawing using the first letter of his name, has led to other projects and collaborations.
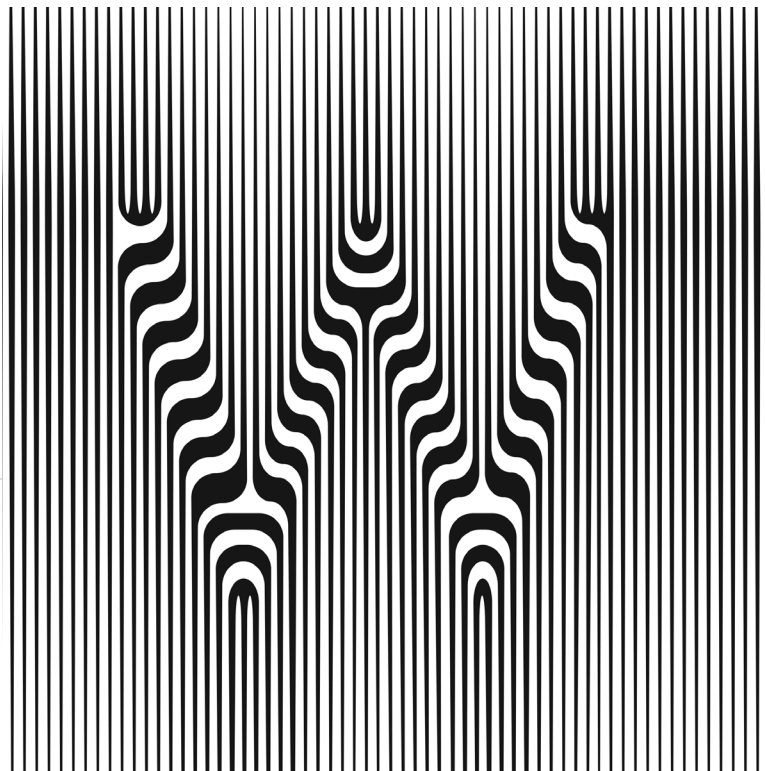
we discussed that maybe we make work that's so complex because that's the only we way know to be original. That feels true at this moment.

We want to be smarter than our software, because software is accessible to any designer. We cannot get away with using an obvious software effect. To stand out, we have to use it in such a way that it cannot be recognised.

Your colour palettes are bright but simple, with just two or three colours. To what extent are they dictated by production methods as well as aesthetic preference?
For years, I only worked in black and white. I was convinced that paper was white, and typography was black. But when I started to design hardcover clothbound books, it turned out that white linen did not work well because it gets dirty easily.

I started picking colours from the factory swatches, and had great joy in combining them with coloured foil print. Also, I started using my type experiments for screenprinted posters for a gallery. Similar to picking linen, I picked coloured paper to screenprint on.

Because I was printing the posters myself, two or three layers

was about the maximum I could handle in one day. I needed contrast between the coloured paper and ink, otherwise the lines disappear and I can never create anything legible.

I still tend to start in black and white. It's the highest contrast, and makes images pop. To vary things – or because clients ask for it – I do try to design in colour, but adding colour to a black-and-white design is hard for me. It demands a different treatment of contrast and legibility.

Your books Sketchbook and Sketch Cahier feature rejected and unfinished work, as well as failed experiments. Why is this?
I've developed a design process that involves a lot of trial and error. Making as many sketches as possible to investigate possibilities is very time-consuming, but also allows me to step over clichés and fine-tune happy accidents. When working towards one single end result for a commission, of course a lot of these options get left unfinished.

Whenever I tried to clean out my backups, I kept finding potential starting points. By turning that computer document into book pages, I thought I was over and done with these open ends. But

after publishing the 448-page book representing 10 years of sketches, they became a new starting point.

On the one hand, this is a good way to start at a higher level – saving time, without losing design quality. By showing rough material, light starting points and attempts, it can also help stimulate different kinds of commissioners.

So instead of book design commissions, I began to be asked for typographic illustration work, and even approached by architects. It turned out to be really interesting to explore potential that had not already been used.

Can you give any examples of personal experiments that have led to commissioned work?
When I fell in love with my current boyfriend, I could not concentrate on work – so I decided to design the first letter of his name.

As commissioned assignments came in, I continued to work on this type system. I used it for a magazine cover, a notebook series, and Nike knocked on my door twice asking me to use this 'W for W' type sample as a starting point for artwork.

Over the different assignments, the treatment evolved. Currently

quick bown

is kortjakje

ABCDEFG

abcdef

waar omen

werd gedanst
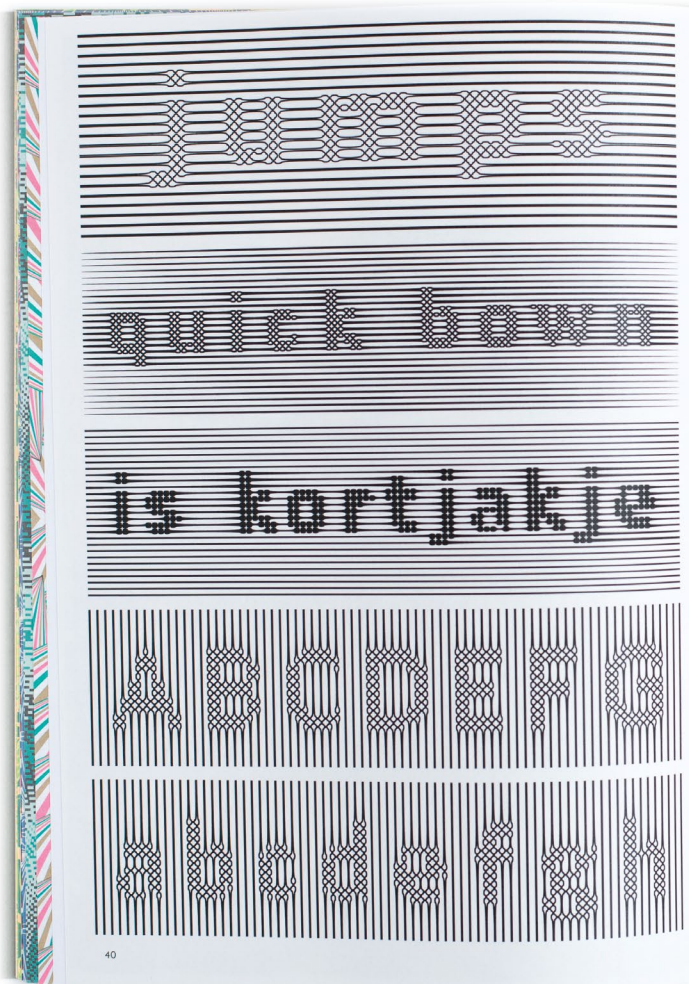
it is maturing in the identity that we're making for the Dutch music festival Lowlands.

The drawing system is turned into a Python-based DrawBot script by Just van Rossum. In this script, text or vector images serve as inputs, and a rendered vector image of animation comes out of the DrawBot script. I thought it would save us time, but it turns out it just provides more options. I love it, and wish I could work like this more!

What is it about print that still gets you excited, and how do you ensure you get the most from the medium?
What I like about print first of all is the print run. The fact that you can make multiples still is magical to me.

But secondly – and even more importantly – is the fact that you can change the material. You can change its texture, weight, shape, and tactility. I experienced the same when working with metal.

The idea for my publication 'III' came about as I was designing endpapers for publishing house Uitgeverij De Buitenkant – some for books I had designed, but also for ones I hadn't. We began trading pattern designs for printed paper.

For reprints, the publisher would surprise me with colour combinations that I could never have imagined. For III, the printer/publisher and I decided to reprint patterns we'd made, and let him pick the colours.

About half the publication is printed in 28 Pantone colours, the backsides of the paper are digital print, and there's one smashing Riso print spread in the book.

What approach do you take in your creative workshops?
I mainly try to introduce students to the design method that has been very fruitful for me – creating as many failures, mistakes and experiments as you can, without feeling miserable.

I encourage students to avoid making miniature pencil drawings as mock-ups for a real thing. I try to show them that failures are not mistakes, but material. I try to teach them to be creative in their mistakes, and to try to make as many different ones as you can. Sketching time is time to explore, discover, be unsafe, experiment. It really is about quantity over quality!

After a while, you can analyse your sketches, and try to sort them into categories that are visually connected, or were born out of the same intentions. Maybe you discover three or four directions out of a hundred sketches.

My advice is not to look at what you were trying to achieve, but at what is actually on the table. Consider their value, and their potential. There must be two or three directions that make you wonder, 'What would happen if I continue with this?'

Look at things for what they are, and not what you want them to represent. It works for me! □
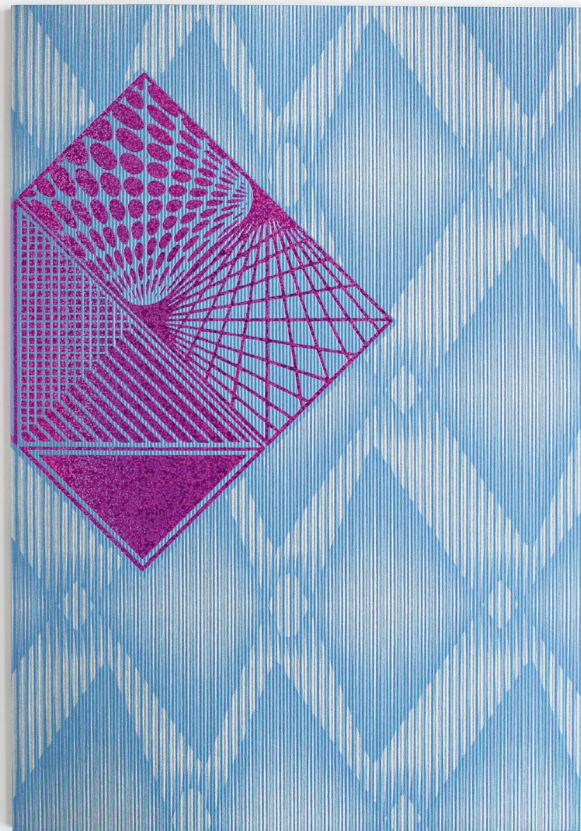
Above and opposite: III consists of various reprints from van Halem's conserved print plates. The printer chose the colours to "surprise" her.

CONTEM

BOOK CO

DESIGN

PORARY
VER

Adrian Shaughnessy, founding partner of Unit Editions, explores the beauty of book cover design, and how the craft is adapting to today's digital world

W

Julian Barnes

WINNER OF THE
DAVID COHEN PRIZE

The Sense of an Ending

hen the graphics on the packaging of Heinz baked beans are changed, or the typography is modified on the wrappers for Kit Kats, the alterations are barely noticeable to the untrained eye. The design of household brands is tampered with as little as possible.

An even more stringent no-tampering rule is applied to album covers. No record label would dare even consider changing the covers of Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, The Dark Side of the Moon or Nevermind.

It appears that the packaging of baked beans, chocolate bars and pop music is treated with more reverence than the jackets of literary fiction. Literature is universally accepted as high art, which might lead us to think that the covers of literary classics are free from the need for frequent stylistic updates. Not so. It is common practice amongst publishers to update the covers of the classics almost constantly, in much the same way that Nike updates its trainers.

This is good news for designers. And even if designing a cover for a new edition of On the Road may not be as financially rewarding as tweaking the Kit Kat logotype, I know which I'd rather do. Designing book covers is in one way like designing album covers: most people do it for love rather than reward. I spoke to some book cover designers to find out more about working in the field.

WHY BE A BOOK COVER DESIGNER?

David Pearson is one of the UK's leading book jacket designers. He studied at Central Saint Martins, and after a period working as a text designer at Penguin, he now runs his own studio. "My inclination to overthink, fuss and fiddle could only be accommodated by the relatively slow-moving nature of publishing," he says. "Working within constraints – be they because of brief or budget – also seems to speak to my nature."

Pearson's career in publishing began while he was at university. "I was fortunate to be asked by my tutor, Phil Baines, to lay out a Phaidon book. Part of the job was to present our ongoing work to the great Alan Fletcher – at that time, creative director of Phaidon – for his feedback." Later, during his time setting the type for the interiors of Penguin books, Pearson was to discover that he was working in what he describes as, "a nice, sedate job." There was room to focus on the detail and lose yourself in the book. Plus: "Nobody really had an opinion on your work, unless you did it wrong." But this all changed when Pearson began to design book covers.
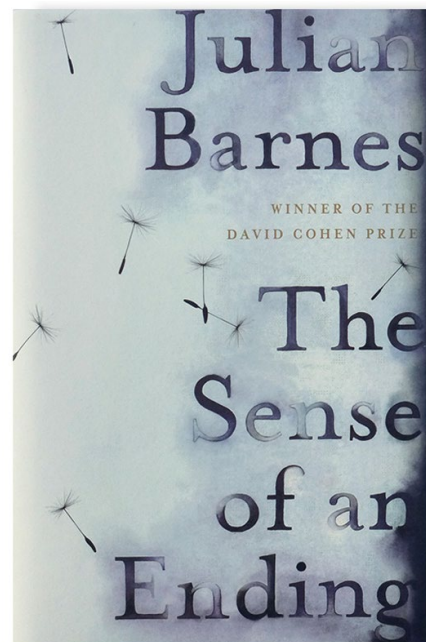
In contemporary publishing, the cover is subjected to the same intense scrutiny as any consumer product. It's also the case that many authors care deeply about the covers of their books. In his acceptance speech on receiving the 2011 Man Booker Prize for his book, The Sense of an Ending, the novelist Julian Barnes paid generous tribute to the book's cover designer, Suzanne Dean. He said: "Those of you who've seen my book – whatever you may think of its contents – will probably agree that it is a beautiful object. And if the physical book, as we've come to

PENGUIN
BOOKS

NINETEEN
EIGHTY-FOUR

GEORGE ORWELL

COMPLETE   UNABRIDGED

David Pearson's cover for Penguin's 2013 edition of George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four features the title and author's name obscured by black foiling.
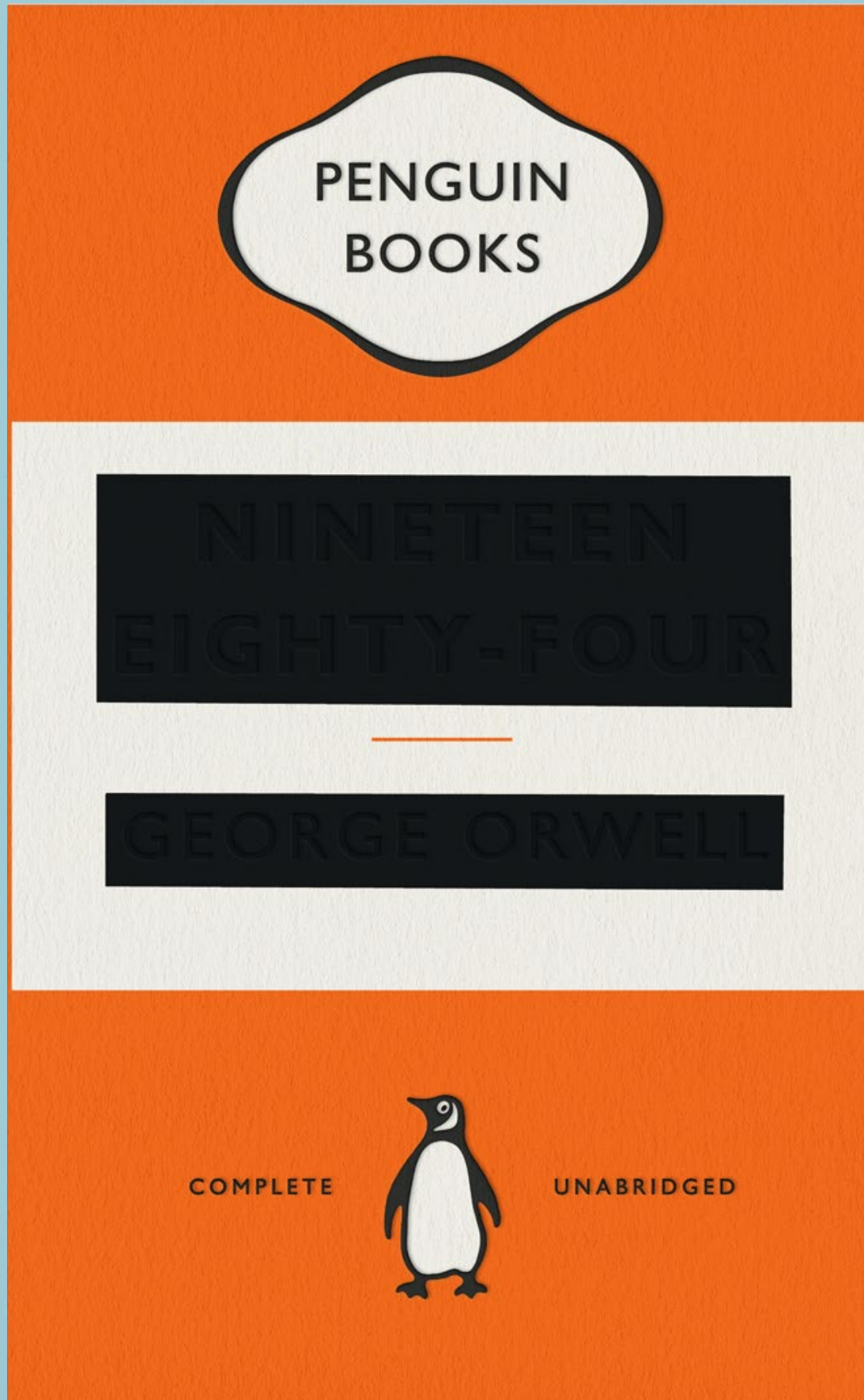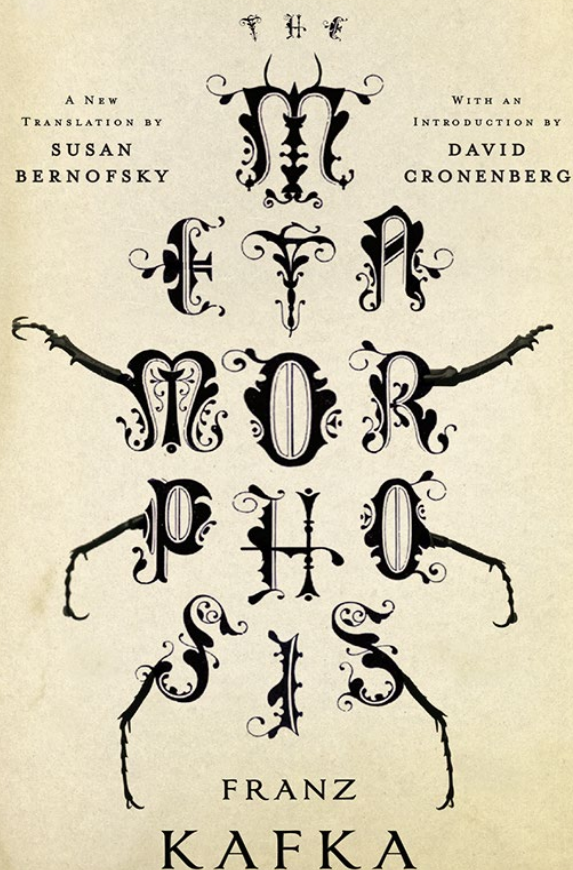
"IT HAS TO LOOK LIKE SOMETHING WORTH BUYING AND WORTH KEEPING"

JULIAN BARNES, AUTHOR

▶ call it, is to resist the challenge of the e-book, it has to look like something worth buying and worth keeping."

Not only must a book cover attract attention by reflecting the content, it must do this online, in bookshops, and as an e-book. It must also satisfy the demands of publisher, author and designer – not to mention the book buyer. This is quite a lot to demand of a few square centimetres of card.

HOW TO DESIGN A BOOK COVER

Designer Sinem Erkas has been designing book jackets for eight years. She stumbled into cover design after a "frustrating job as a junior designer working in corporate branding".

Does she always read the book before designing the cover? "Ideally I would read the whole book, if the deadline lets me," she says. "What I sometimes like to do is read the book only halfway, or three quarters of the way through, before I start sketching some ideas, and then I'll finish reading it before I complete my first round of roughs."

For Pearson, reading the text first is desirable, but not always possible. "Ideally, you would read the book – key themes and ideas present themselves so readily that way – but it's important to remember that the book isn't always written by the time a designer is summoned," he explains. "Often we receive only the vague promise of a book, with design work regularly taking place even before a title is settled on,

which is one of the disadvantages of the cover having to be produced so far in advance. In this instance, I would look to speak to the book's editor or, better still, the author, to try and build a sense of the book's tone and temper."

When designing a cover for a fiction title, Faber & Faber in-house designer Eleanor Crow, insists that reading the text is always essential. "I would find it impossible to get the tone of the writing, and a sense of the readership, without it," she claims. "Also, small details and less obvious, but still significant, strands in the novel might lend themselves to a cover."

Jim Stoddart at Penguin Press also advocates a close reading of the text. But he adds a caveat. "With new books, the ideal set-up is to be given a finished manuscript 12 months before publication, which allows three months to read, digest, come up with ideas, create visuals, get approval for one chosen route, and complete final artwork. However, it would also be wrong to design a cover that only makes sense once you've read the book. The people we are aiming to appeal to are those that haven't read the book, that may be browsing in a bookshop and literally know nothing about the book – you may have only two or three seconds to grab their interest before their eyes drift to the next book."

BOOKS AS MERCHANDISE

As with any commercial project, the merchandising of books is paramount. Although bookshops ▶

David Pearson's design of The Communist Manifesto abandons type in favour of graphics, while typography is the illustration for Jamie Keenan's startling Franz Kafka cover.

PASCAL GARNIER
Cartons
z

KOFFI KWAHULÉ
*Nouvel an
chinois*
z

JEAN-LUC HENNIG
*Brève histoire
des fesses*
z

GERT LEDIG
Sous les bombes
z

ABDOURAHMAN
A. WABERI
*La Divine
Chanson*
z

PASCAL GARNIER
*Comment va la
douleur ?*
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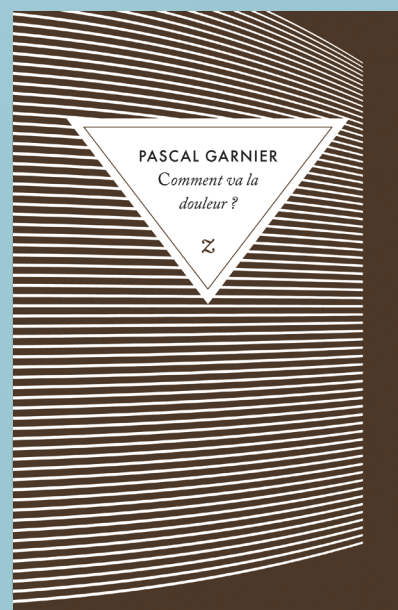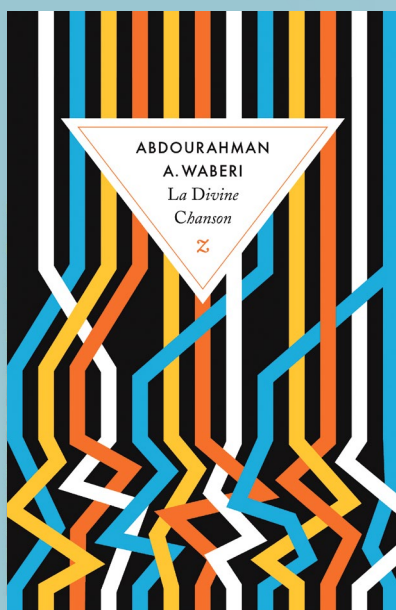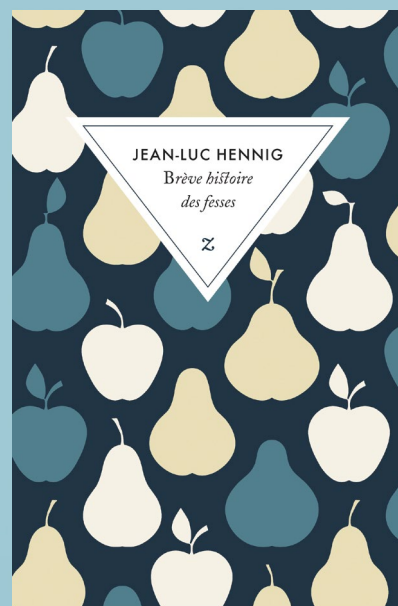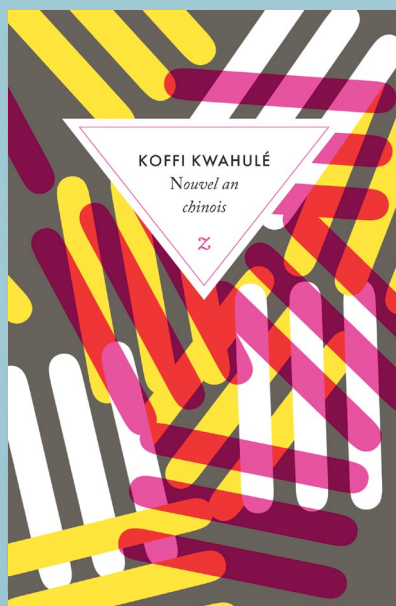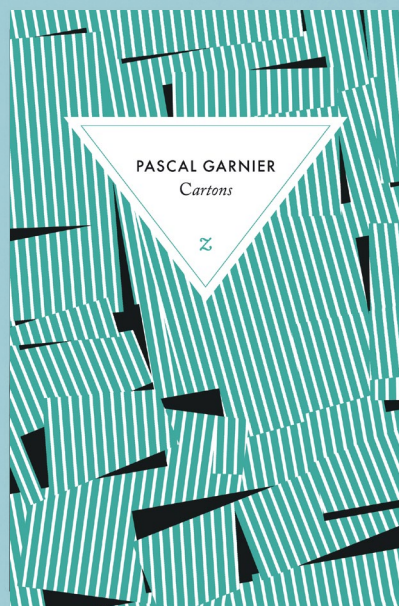
ÉDITIONS ZULMA BY DAVID PEARSON

This range of striking abstract patterned covers for French books was designed by David Pearson. "It's important to point out that I'm not a French speaker, and as a result I have to lean on some incredibly visually literate editors who convey the essence of the books to me," says Pearson. "This process [of discussing books] plugs everyone into the design process and makes us feel collectively responsible for the outcome. It also ensures that I don't shoulder all of the blame when the books fail to sell!" Pearson adds that the French book market is less visually aggressive than in the UK, which allows him to create more quietly suggestive covers.

THIS SIDE OF PARADISE

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

THE GREAT GATSBY
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Now a major film

TENDER, IS THE NIGHT
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

THE LAST TYCOON
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD
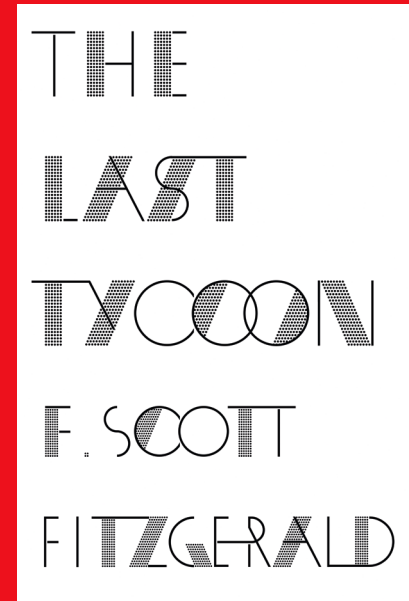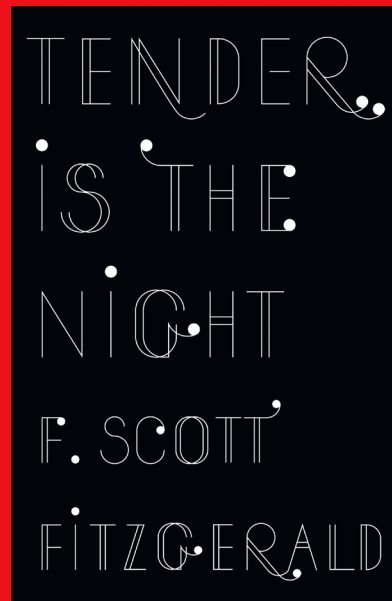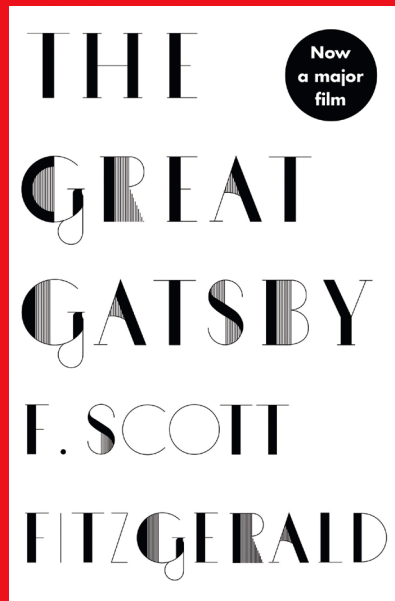
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD SERIES BY SINEM ERKAS

Sinem Erkas' typographic covers for F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels demonstrate how consistency can be partnered with diversity. "At the time, Fitzgerald's stories were out of copyright, so loads of publishers were republishing his books, and I imagined many of them would end up as pastiches. I wanted to avoid that, so instead took the opportunity to draw inspiration from beautiful Art Deco typography and the Jazz Age, but making my own custom typefaces that felt contemporary and hinted at Art Deco rather than looking like they were from the 1920s. There was no budget for finishes, so we decided to stick to a monotone colour palette and uncoated stock."

TALES OF THE JAZZ AGE
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

The Fox and the Star, written and illustrated by Coralie Bickford-Smith, who also designed Penguin's Clothbound Classics series.
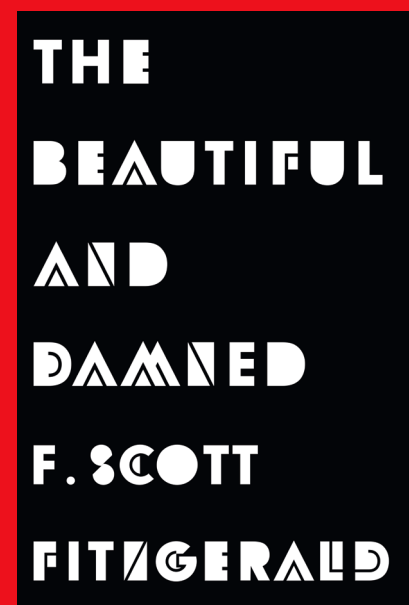
"COVERS CAN BE MORE REDUCTIVE, AND SMARTER, THAN IN THE RECENT PAST"

ELEANOR CROW, DESIGNER

were widely tipped to be on the way to oblivion a few years ago, they are making a comeback, and regardless, book covers are designed to have shelf appeal, even if the 'shelf' is a page on Amazon.

For Pearson, being aware of related titles is becoming ever more important, since books are often grouped this way in bookshops. "Knowing what you are siding with – or indeed kicking against – can really help get the design process moving," he says. "Time-honoured classics are invariably sat alongside alternative editions of the very same book. This can present some exciting possibilities, since your own edition can do something the others are not prepared to, making them look plain by comparison." You can even remove key content from your own design since it will be 'filled in' by those around it, Pearson adds.

While many designers complain about the restrictions imposed by retail conventions, Crow strikes a more upbeat note. "It's quite liberating now," she notes, "as there

has been a great deal more press coverage for book covers than in the past. Everyone is keen for something visually arresting, rather than giving away every last plot detail on the cover." This means that covers can be more reductive, and smarter, than in the recent past, Crow continues. "Retailers are keen for things that will look striking in the window, as well as be legible in a tiny thumbnail online."

ILLUSTRATION, TYPOGRAPHY OR PHOTOGRAPHY?
Looking at current book designs, it's hard not to conclude that illustration is enjoying a fertile period. Coralie Bickford-Smith is widely celebrated for her illustrated covers, which use naturalistic patterns and motifs. When asked whether she thinks her work is representative of a preference amongst book buyers for illustrated covers, she says, "It is more likely a trend that is coming from the number of illustrated covers
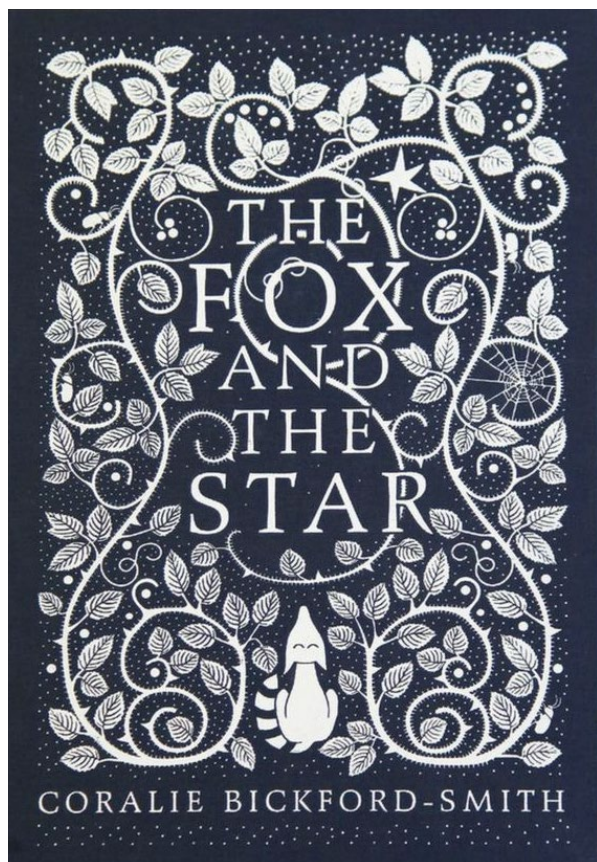
CREATIVE CONTROL   CORALIE BICKFORD-SMITH

Coralie Bickford-Smith works mostly on covers for classic literature. She has worked with photography in the past, but prefers illustration. "It's a personal approach," she says. "I feel I have more control over an illustration as it is being created from scratch."

You design most of your covers yourself. When do you commission an illustration?
I commission illustrators when I feel that a particular person is perfectly suited

to the brief that I have in my hands. It's about creating the best cover for an author's work, and there are times when I'm not the best person for that brief.

What qualities do you look for in a book cover illustrator?
The ability to make the brief their own. I want an illustrator to be able to push the boundaries of the grid or the rules I set. I like an illustrator to take that brief a little bit further and challenge my expectations of what that cover can be.

Do you retain control of the typography when commissioning an illustration?
I'm currently commissioning illustrations that fit into a grid for a particular series, so I retain control of the typography to create consistency across the series. That grid might have been established years ago, so it's important to make sure the books still look like they belong to their predecessors. But there are other times when everything is commissioned out to an illustrator and they get to call the shots on all the elements of a cover.
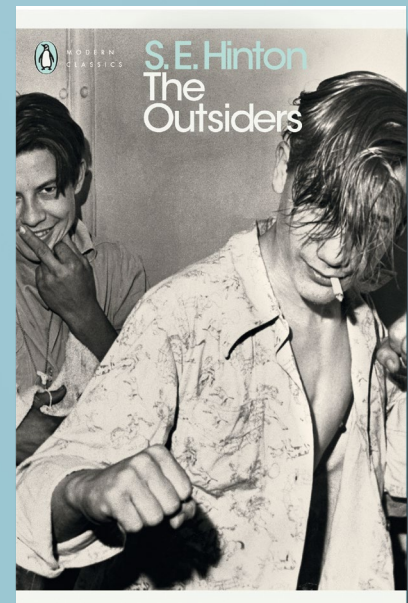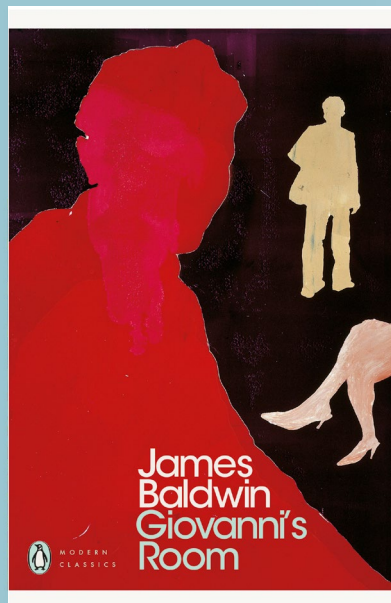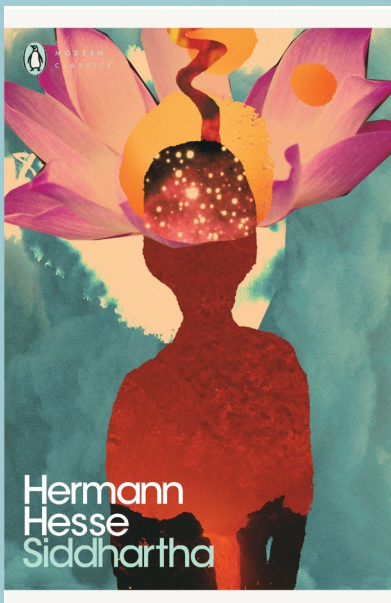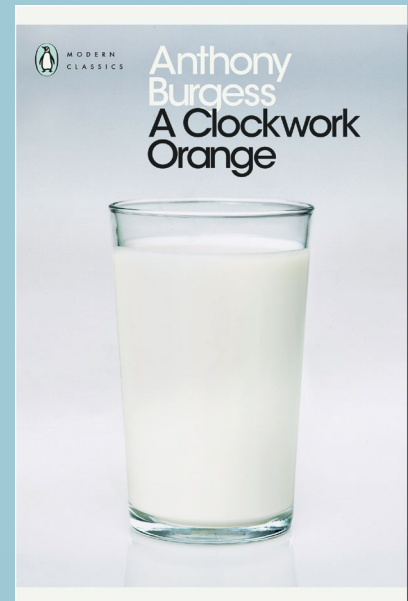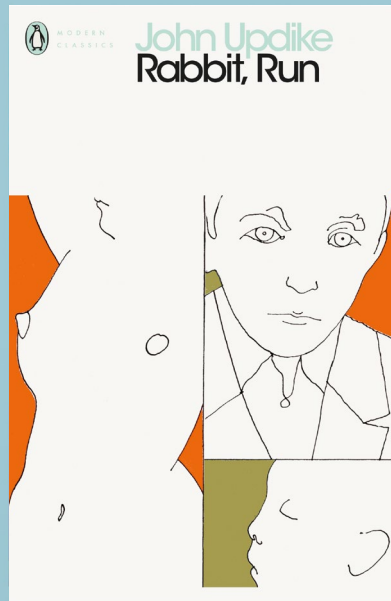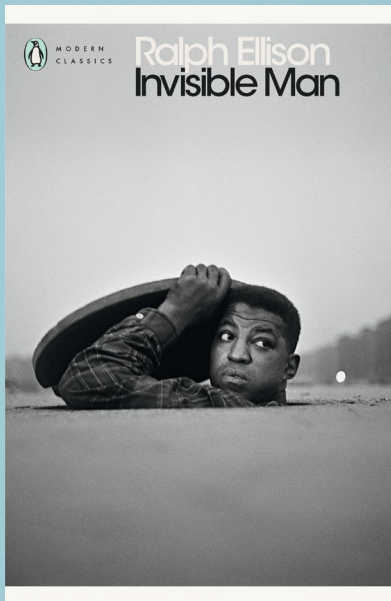
PENGUIN MODERN CLASSICS BY JIM STODDART

In developing an update of the Penguin Modern Classics series, Jim Stoddart and his team worked through 100 book covers, a job that involved new picture research as well as new imagery. "I've really enjoyed consolidating the covers for John Updike's Rabbit series by reviving iconic Penguin covers," he says. "In fact, the 1960s Rabbit, Run cover featured an illustration by Milton Glaser, which we've put back on the cover. We also asked Milton Glaser (now aged 88) to do a fresh illustration for the last in the Rabbit series, which he was kind enough to do for us, completing the circle 57 years later," he explains.

THE WASTE LAND

T. S. ELIOT

"TYPOGRAPHIC COVERS ARE GREAT FOR BEING TIMELESS"

SINEM ERKAS, DESIGNER

> coming out of the publishing houses that end up adorning the bookshops, rather than the book buyers making a deliberate aesthetic choice." Bickforth-Smith adds that the use of photography and illustration on book covers seem to go in cycles of popularity.

Although she has previously used photography in her cover designs, Bickford-Smith isn't keen on doing so. "A shoot is usually over in a day, and the results are final, bar some great Photoshop work," she says. "I like to work slower than that. I like time to consider the idea. I need to stare at rough work a lot. I really think it's a personal thing. Also, given how I'm obsessed with pattern, right now illustration is a perfect way for me to express those ideas visually."

For Pearson, the choice is easy: "I cannot illustrate covers – I have to rope in others to do that – and I'm terrified of photography – cropping other people's art to fit a cover shape makes me feel sick. That leaves typography, and I tend to lean on it for everything. Using lettering in place of representational imagery can also help to activate reader interpretation – I think we enjoy working for answers." Pearson adds that typography also presents a lovely challenge for a designer – to sum up an entire book using such limited graphic means.

"I think typographic covers are great for being timeless, not revealing too much, and they work particularly well if the title is just brilliant," says Erkas. "Illustrated covers are great for capturing feelings that photography can't. And photographic covers are great for showing something real, but can also be dreamy, abstract and illustrative."

BOOKS ONLINE AND E-BOOKS

Just as record cover designers had to adjust to the loss of the 12″ square album cover, replaced by the reduced canvas of the CD, book jacket designers are learning to adapt to the e-book format. But what is the role of a cover in publishing e-books?

In Pearson's opinion, "beyond working as a thumbnail at the point of sale in the online shop", there is no role for a cover in electronic format. "When the e-book is purchased and installed, there seems no good reason for a cover image at all, especially if it takes up more memory than the book itself," he argues.

Crow takes a similarly stringent line. "I have never read an e-book. I read manuscripts on an iPad, but a paperback isn't much heavier than an e-book reader, and I prefer real pages. Our covers are used to sell e-books online in any case. It would be less interesting to buy a book from a list of titles without some visual trigger to hint at the contents," she says.

For Stoddart, the need for a book to have an online presence is factored into his thinking from the start. "One recent project I've been very excited about is an update to the Penguin Modern Classics series, initiated with a casual discussion about whether we could make [the series] more visible as online thumbnails. This is a contentious issue – many people will argue that more and more books are bought online and their visibility at a small size is fundamental. Yet books listed on websites are usually accompanied by text, a reiteration of title and author, and a bucket of metadata."

To find a solution, Stoddart turned to colour. "A recent update of the Modern Classics template uses Penguin 'eau-de-nil' – a muted light turquoise which has evolved from other parts of Penguin's history. This eau-de-nil is a beautiful colour that works well in the flesh and online. I've moved it onto the spines (which were an all too crisp white) and the back covers, and have used it as a brand note on the front cover titling."

It's flashes of creativity like this that keep the field exciting. "If all bookshops ended up having to stock books with giant titles and images, the world may as well be over," Stoddart concludes. ◻

Emily Mahon, art director at Doubleday, has delivered a multitude of award-winning book cover designs.

JUNIOR DESIGNER MANUAL

HOW TO COLOUR CORRECT

DESIGN MATTERS

In the first of a series focusing on tasks commonly given to junior designers, we look at colour correction: what it is, why it's important, and how to get better at it

WORDS: Tom May

Colour correction is a phrase that often appears in job ads for junior designers, but it can mean different things to different people. If a studio mainly works with motion graphics, animation and film, the ad is probably talking about colour correction of video, aka colour grading. However, if it's a studio dealing mainly with graphic design, branding, packaging and/or digital design, it's more likely to be referring to the colour correction of still images.

In this sense, colour correction essentially means improving the look of a photograph by adjusting the levels of particular colours within it, using image editing software such as Photoshop. It's a key skill that any junior (or even intern) in a design role will be expected to be familiar with, and a common task they're liable to get passed at a moment's notice.

Scott Kimble, image creation director at London design agency BrandOpus, offers an example. "We'll have shot some biscuits, and you want them to look golden and vibrant when they appear on the packaging. But they've come out a bit green. That might be due to the level of cyan, so colour correction might involve, among other things, dropping the cyan

down to take the greenness out of the image and make the biscuits look more golden."

THE FUNDAMENTALS

To be able to colour correct images, you first need to learn some basic principles, such as which colours are complementary (on opposite sides of the colour wheel), so you can adjust one colour to cancel out too much of another. You also need to be able to spot where colours are the most prominent, such as when red is dominating the light areas of a photo, or blue is dominating the dark areas.

It's also about mastering the different tools in Photoshop involved in colour correction, including Curves and Levels. Similarly, you'll need to become proficient at using Photoshop's selection tools, so you're able to efficiently colour correct specific sections of an image.

Colour correction is particularly important when it comes to printing, where you often need to convert images from RGB (the colour system used for screens) to CMYK (the system used to talk to colour printers). "If you've got something in RGB, on the screen it looks lovely and bright and fluorescent," explains Kimble. "You've got the greens punching and the

MAKE YOUR IMAGES POP

SCOTT KIMBLE EXPLAINS HOW HE COLOUR CORRECTED IMAGES FOR THREE DIFFERENT BRANDOPUS CAMPAIGNS

BEFORE

MR KIPLING

"I needed to make the fruit and the tarts look appetising, but for the scene to still feel rich and intense. Every element was considered, from the crust of the tart to the white of the label. I worked on each element separately. For instance, I only did one lemon at a time because you have to take into account the lighting on each one. The key to colour balancing is to make the right selections; one tip is to use the most contrasted channels to create a more natural selection."

AFTER

Colour correction is particularly important when it comes to printing, where you often need to convert images from RGB to CMYK

BEFORE

BELVEDERE

"I needed to make the fruit look punchier and fresh; not just brightening it but lifting the colour. I kept the actual bottle in front of me to make sure I got it right. I also warmed up the wood on the cutting board to make it stand out a bit more. The whites came out of the camera a bit dull, so I used curves to brighten – dropping the cyan ever so slightly so as not to look too blue."

AFTER

❯ purples are really rich. But when you convert that to CMYK, it's just flattened. The green's going to go flat, the purple's going to die a bit. So you've got to go into that image and punch those colours back up again, so it looks as good in print as it did on the screen."

FROM PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE

The fundamental principles and techniques of colour correction are relatively straightforward, and there are a number of online tutorials, videos and books that will explain them to you. As well as YouTube and Vimeo, check out TutsPlus, Photoshop Essentials and Lynda.com.

But although understanding the basic rules will help get you started, colour correction is as much of an art as it is a science. And that means the only way you'll improve your abilities over time is to practise.

"Watching tutorials is great," says Anthony Passler, senior creative artworker at Hogarth Worldwide, "but you really need to get your hands dirty, take photos of stuff and compare the photograph to the real-world item, and then try to match them up."

STAYING AHEAD OF THE GAME

Gwendolyn Mumford, a junior designer at AIG in Texas, agrees that it's well worth improving

BEFORE

J.F. RABBIT

"I needed to brighten up the white while retaining the detailing that came out of the camera. The label is a white vignette that fades to clear to reveal the liquid inside. From the camera, you couldn't tell the colour, so I kept a bottle on my desk. The green on the label came out a bit dull so I stripped out some yellow to match the brand colour."

AFTER

Just like everything, the more you experiment and fail, the better you understand the subject

your skills beyond the minimum levels formally required. "When I use colour correction as part of my regular workflow for print and web graphics, these are usually fairly simple jobs," she explains. "But it still helps to have taken courses that taught more advanced correction techniques, as it prevents that task from slowing down my workflow."

Kyriakos Kokkinos, a junior designer at London and Leeds agency Delete, concurs, and notes that practice will boost your confidence. "While I was at university I was very afraid of trying to colour correct, thinking it would look very off and not as intended," he admits. "But, just like everything, the more you experiment and fail, the better you understand the subject. And that's exactly what is going to get you the best end result."

Even once you're experienced, you still never stop improving your colour correction skills. "Photoshop is ever evolving," notes Passler. "So keeping up to date is important, and therefore you never really stop learning." Kimble agrees. "I only found out about Photoshop's Channel Mixer a few years ago," he says. "I suddenly realised I could use it to mix stuff on an Adjustment Layer, which is so much faster than the way I did it before. It just goes to show that there are always new techniques to learn." □

FIVE TIPS FOR COLOUR CORRECTING IMAGES
HOW TO GET TO GRIPS WITH COLOUR CORRECTION

1 WATCH YOUR HUES
Working as a junior, you're likely to be asked to switch machines quite often. So beware, as different computers can show the same colours differently, says Sarah Gray of Dublin's All Out Design. "I mainly work on my MacBook Pro with a Retina display, which has a tendency to make images look great on screen," she notes. "But on other screens, the colours can be a bit too hot and vibrant."

2 TAKE SCREEN BREAKS
Take regular breaks for your eyes to stop them getting used to a certain colour, adds Gray. "Your eyes aren't infallible," she stresses. "If you've been looking at a strong colour, your eye will be used to that colour, and have developed a bias."

3 USE MONOCHROME
Remember you can still colour correct in black and white. "There's a pretty cool Photoshop filter called Black & White, where you overlay an adjustment layer over an RGB image," says Scott Kimble of BrandOpus. "So you can pull out the reds, the blues, the greens, and really make that image look punchier."

4 ASK YOUR COLLEAGUES
Keep looking for new ways to perform the same task, advises Anthony Passler of Hogarth Worldwide. "There are always different ways to achieve the same result in Photoshop," he points out. "So it's always interesting to chat to colleagues to find out how they achieved a certain result."

5 AUTOMATE FOR SPEED
While automation will only get you some of the way to a perfectly colour-balanced image, it can be very helpful when you're doing large batches of similar images, explains Gray. "So try recording the colour correction as a Photoshop Action to save time," she recommends.

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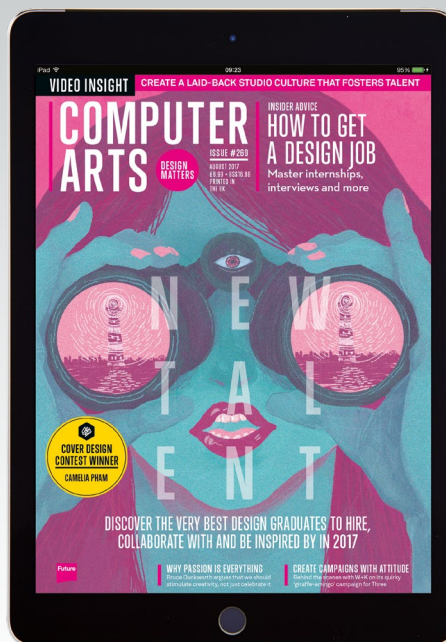
ISSUE 269
AUGUST 2017

- New talent special! We reveal the best design graduates
- How to get your first design job
- Why D&AD New Blood is not about winning
- Behind the scenes at laid-back studio Halo

ISSUE 268
JULY 2017

Learn how to make more money as a freelancer with our guide to cashing in. Discover four key trends in character design, plus how to use digital tools to get a handmade look
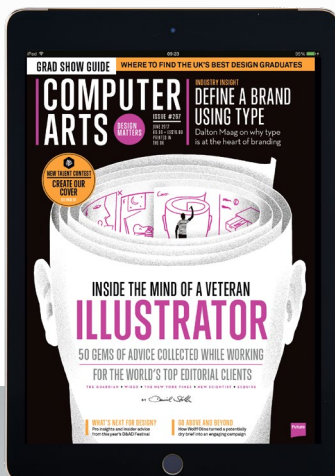
ISSUE 267
JUNE 2017

Illustrator Daniel Stolle shares what he's learnt working with top editorial clients. Plus: we reveal what it takes to win a D&AD Award, and nail your final year show
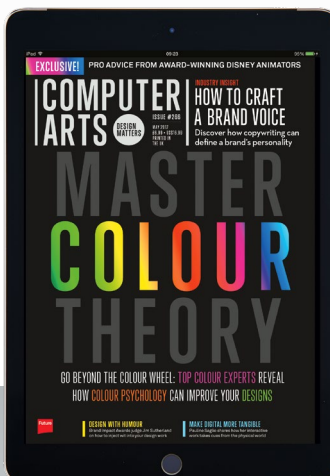
ISSUE 266
MAY 2017

Go beyond the colour wheel as we explore how colour psychology can improve your designs. Plus: how to become a better animator, design with wit and craft a brand voice.

ISSUE 265
SPRING 2017

Tailor your portfolio to get your ideal job, discover the four key rules of brand strategy, get inspired by tattoo design, and master the art of storyboarding.

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PROJECTS

Computer Arts goes behind the scenes with world-leading designers as they reveal their working processes...

brand **impact** awards**.**

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THE YOU INSIDE
Behind the scenes with Canadian agency lg2 on an evocative project that aspires to make the world more accepting of transgender children

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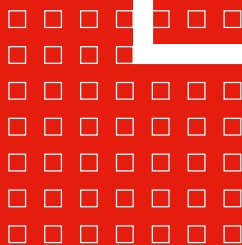SUBSCRIBE TODAY FOR PRO INSIGHT AND PRACTICAL ADVICE EVERY MONTH - SEE PAGE 38

HOW TO CREATE WORLD-CLASS

BRAN

Left to right:
Jim Sutherland, Sue
Daun, Stuart Youngs,
Louise Kyme, Dave
Wood, Caroline Till.

IDING

We pulled aside six of the **Brand Impact Awards** 2017 judging panel during their deliberations to discuss what defines great branding in the modern marketplace

brand
impact
awards**.**

BRAND IMPACT AWARDS
Now in their fourth year, Computer Arts' Brand Impact Awards reward the world's very best branding. In 2017, judges included creative directors from Studio Sutherl&, Interbrand and Wolff Olins, as well as client-side experts who've worked with the likes of Mars, Carlsberg and British Heart Foundation. From a record 187 entries, 49 made the shortlist – the winners will be revealed at the BIA ceremony in September, and in the next issue of CA.

Modern branding faces a dizzying array of challenges. Consumers are bored, over-stimulated and increasingly sceptical about inauthentic marketing ploys, so engaging them in fresh, meaningful ways is the holy grail for any branding agency. Fortunately, our Brand Impact Awards judging panel is well-placed to dig a little deeper into the art and craft involved. 2017's BIA winners will be revealed next issue – here, the panel debate hot topics such as wit in branding, the importance of taking risks, and why emerging tech could transform branding as we know it...

Why is wit, charm and humour so important in branding? How does it help create standout?
Louise Kyme: It's a big world out there, and everybody's competing for the same space.

More and more people are having one-to-one interactions on social media, and brands feel the need to get some kind of emotional response, whether that's a little snigger, or a tear in the eye. But it's tough. Brands work hard to get easy laughs, but actually, clever interaction takes time, thought and intelligence.
Jim Sutherland: I think it depends on your definition of wit. I don't think it's about humour and making people laugh necessarily – it's about intelligence, and gauging people. There's so much bland, corporate wallpaper out there. Wit is a way of engaging people, and having a bit of humanity. The trouble is when it goes wrong, it just feels like it's massively condescending and isn't very funny. There are lots of examples of brands that get it wrong – it's like somebody's written a really bad joke, and you're supposed to laugh at it over and over again.   ▶

View the full BIA 2017 shortlist at **www.brandimpactawards.com**

WHEN BRANDS TRY TO USE HUMOUR 24/7, IT'S LIKE BEING ON A BAD DATE WITH SOMEONE WHO'S TRYING REALLY HARD TO BE FUNNY ALL THE TIME

LOUISE KYME

LK: Brands trying to use humour 24/7 is the equivalent of going on a bad date, and someone trying really hard to be funny all the time.
JS: Constantly. That's exactly right. It's choosing your moments, isn't it? Rather than just banging people over the head. If you have someone that constantly tells you jokes, unless they're a clown, it's not very appropriate is it? I don't think so.

How can brands behave in a more 'human' way, and establish empathy? How much of it is visual, compared to tone of voice?
JS: There's no way of separating out those two things – you need both. It's about being genuine. I don't want my bank telling me jokes about what they're doing – or not doing – with my money. You need appropriateness, and genuineness. You don't want to feel that somebody's pulling the wool over your eyes.
LK: To behave empathetically, you have to really relate to your audience and understand the situations they're in. You talk about appropriate moments, Jim – that could be totally dependent on what you're trying to achieve, but also where your audience are at certain moments. In a way, it's easier to do in the charity sector because you're very closely connected to people, and where they're at in their lives.
JS: Just be honest. That's the key. You're never empathetic with somebody when you don't feel like they're telling you the truth.

LK: Small organisations probably act more as individuals, compared to these big corporate beasts that have systems and structures in place to manage how things are done. They risk losing that human touch.
JS: It's a corporate machine – hence that idea of corporate wallpaper. A lot of design is bland because it's not doing any of those things.

Are certain types of brand better at doing this, and why do you think this is?
JS: It's probably easiest to do in the charity and cultural sectors than in banking, say, because everybody hates bankers, or solicitors, or estate agents – so it's more difficult to do engaging work in those areas. People want to like galleries and charities, don't they? They don't necessarily want to like some other corporate institutions. It's doable, but comes back to not pretending to be something you're not. Not trying to look friendly and cuddly when you're an axe murderer.
LK: It's one of these things that as soon as you try to achieve it, it all goes wrong.
JS: When it works well, it feels effortless. When it's trying too hard – too many bits of tone, like packaging that just talks to you constantly – people get a bit tired of it, I think. But doing effortless work takes a lot of work. It takes time to come up with something that looks like you came up with it really quickly, because it just feels like the right solution.

TAP TO WATCH THE VIDEO NOW

JIM SUTHERLAND
Founder, Studio Sutherl&
LOUISE KYME
Branding consultant
Co-chair of judges at the BIAs, Jim co-founded hat-trick in 2001, and left after 13 years to set up Studio Sutherl&. He has headed up rebrands across a range of sectors, including the Natural History Museum, Wimbledon, Williams F1 and Prostate Cancer UK. Louise is a branding consultant working both client and agency side, with over 15 years' experience in the charity sector – notably at British Heart Foundation.

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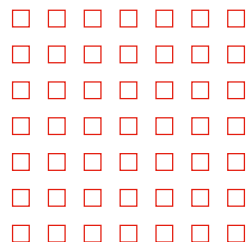awards**.**

TAKING THE RIGHT RISKS

Sue Daun and Dave Wood discuss
what risk means to their agencies...

When and why is it important to take risks?
Dave Wood: Risk taking is something we do
day in, day out. We don't pick and choose when
to take risks, but prefer to let the idea lead the
way. Inherently we like to be over-ambitious to
do the best work possible for the client, and
sometimes that's in tight time frames with tight
budgets – but we always find a way of doing
it. There's a bit of risk involved in that, but you
have to hold onto the integrity of that idea, and
convince clients to believe in it too.

Sue Daun: That's a great way of describing
it. For us, risk is when we push a client way
outside the brief, and go in with a solution that
challenges and reframes their brief massively.
You need to take them on a bit of that journey,
so they feel confident it's not really a risk.

As a bigger agency, often they'll listen to us if
we tell them it'll be okay. But there's definitely

PEOPLE WANT TO LIKE GALLERIES AND CHARITIES, BUT EVERYBODY HATES BANKERS, SOLICITORS AND ESTATE AGENTS. IT'S HARDER TO BE ENGAGING

JIM SUTHERLAND

▶

**TAP TO WATCH THE VIDEO NOW**

SUE DAUN
ECD, Interbrand
DAVE WOOD
Design director, GBH
Executive creative director
at Interbrand London, Sue
has over 20 years experience
working with global clients
across all sectors and
channels. While at BIA-
winning agency GBH, Dave
has designed everything
from postage stamps to
space rockets for clients
including Virgin Galactic,
Puma and Royal Mail.
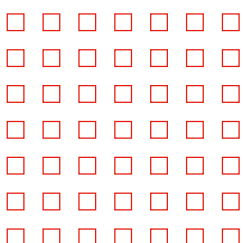
SOME CLIENTS COME WANTING A FORMULAIC SOLUTION. WE RARELY GIVE THEM THAT, BUT WE MAY HAVE TO TAKE THEM ON A LONGER JOURNEY

SUE DAUN

a thrill when you go in with a risky solution. You go in with your heart pounding, and you're excited because you've got a great idea.

GBH has one office and under 20 staff, while Interbrand has 20 offices and is part of a huge holding company [Omnicom]. How do these two set-ups affect your ability to take risks?
SD: We're lucky as we're supported by a great team that encourage us to take risks. We're not a blame culture, so that's a really healthy operation to work within.

I think as a big network, with a proven track record – underpinned by measurement and analytics, as well as creativity – we're able to get clients to buy braver. Having the weight of a business like Interbrand behind us, they tend to sit back and listen, and we don't have to work that hard to push them a little bit further.

It also can play negatively. Some clients come because they want a trusted, formulaic solution. We rarely give them exactly that, but sometimes we have to take them on a longer journey.
DW: Because we're smaller, and independent, we can pick and choose when to take risks – but like I said before, we let the idea lead. It's the idea that determines whether we take risks or not.

At GBH, we work on a wide range of projects, from small – where there's more freedom – to big campaigns for clients such as Puma and Virgin Galactic. Actually it's those bigger jobs,

with more of a presence, where there's an opportunity to take bigger risks.

What are the best examples of brands that have taken creative risks that have paid off?
DW: Inglorious Fruit and Veg, the [Black Pencil-winning] Intermarché campaign a few years ago. They put these ugly, misshapen fruit and veg in their aisles, and encouraged people to buy them. It could easily have had the opposite effect, but there was real confidence and belief in the idea.
**SD:** Another good example is Harvey Nichols' 'Sorry, I spent it on myself' campaign. It tugged at your heart strings, but in a tongue in cheek way. For a luxury brand to treat design in such a brutal way was a fantastic 'two fingers up' to the industry, and it drew people in who perhaps hadn't bought into the brand before.

WHAT'S NEXT IN BRANDING?
Caroline Till and Stuart Youngs share what's getting them excited this year

What are the biggest aesthetic movements in design and branding at the moment?
Caroline Till: At FranklinTill, we've been talking a lot about 'digital real' – designers making rendered images look as real, textural and three-dimensional as possible. Playing with perceptions of what is digital, and what is real.
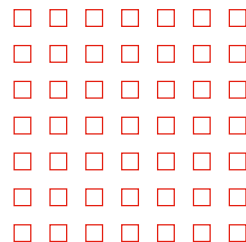
TAP TO WATCH THE VIDEO NOW
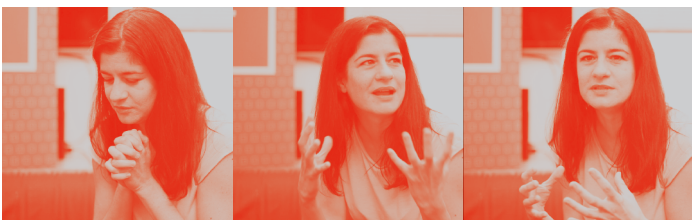
CAROLINE TILL
Co-founder, FranklinTill
STUART YOUNGS
Founder, Texture
Caroline is co-founder of futures consultancy FranklinTill Studio, which works with a range of global clients including G.F Smith and Pantone. Formerly partner at multi-BIA-winning agency Purpose, Stuart is now creative director of Texture – a pioneering studio blending human ingenuity with AI.

brand **impact** awards**.**

USE TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL TO ADD ANOTHER DIMENSION TO A PROJECT. IF IT BECOMES A GIMMICK, YOU'LL LOSE YOUR AUDIENCE

CAROLINE TILL

So much communication is now screen-based, so we're interested in dynamic branding experiences that bring products to life digitally, and make them both dynamic and textural.

What about technological trends – how can designers embrace emerging developments in areas such as AI and VR in meaningful ways?
Stuart Youngs: Being open-minded is the first step. There's a nervousness about AI taking all our jobs, but I don't think it's about that. AI can fit into the branding process.

Take tone of voice. A machine can learn what that tone is, what kind of words they use, and create a filter for any writing for that brand to run through. It can then give recommendations for adjustments to make it more on-brand. It's a relationship of man and machine, rather than man versus machine.

CT: When it comes to an emerging technology, think of it as a tool. If the brief is: 'We want to use this type of technology', rather than it being applied in a meaningful way, there's a danger of it becoming a gimmick, and you risk losing your audience. The best examples add another dimension to the project, and are in tune with the experience that you're trying to create.
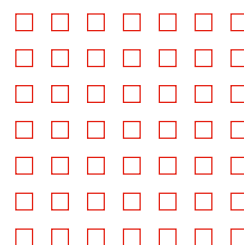
SY: I couldn't agree more. When you look at where VR has been most successful so far, it's in gaming. It really does enhance the experience. With augmented reality, the standout example is definitely Pokémon GO.

Where you've seen it used as a platform to really engage people, it's super. If it adds to the experience that you're trying to deliver, then use it. If it doesn't, find another way, frankly.

We've got a role as designers to try and create brands that are more engaging, have some substance, and add meaning to peoples' lives. At the moment, there's just too much vanilla.

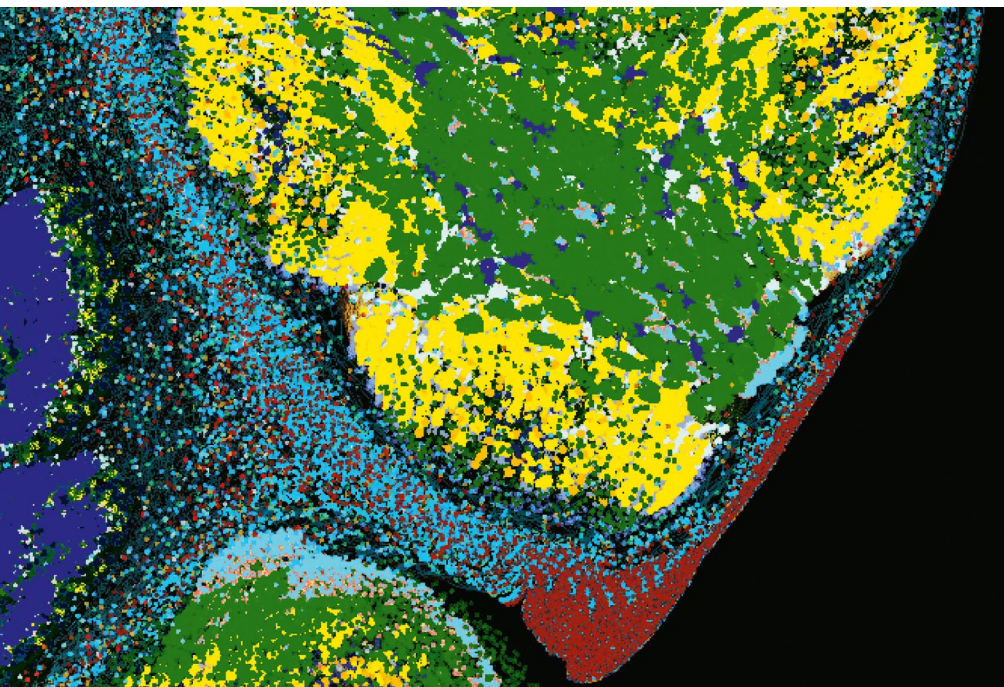## Watch the videos on our YouTube channel: **www.bit.ly/ca270-bia2017**

■ **PROJECT DIARY**

GRAPHCORE BRANDING: ARTIFICALLY INTELLIGENT

How Pentagram partners **Jody Hudson-Powell** and **Luke Powell** created a dynamic identity for a company specialising in machine learning

CORE

JODY HUDSON-POWELL
Partner, Pentagram
After graduating from Central Saint Martins, Jody completed an MSc in virtual environment at The Bartlett School of Architecture – UCL, and began his career focusing on motion and generative visual identity development. With his brother Luke, he co-founded Hudson-Powell in 2005, and also served as design director at Wolff Olins from 2010. In 2015, he and Luke became Pentagram partners.

DESIGN BRIEF
Jody Hudson-Powell

Graphcore approached Pentagram so the project came in as an enquiry to all London partners. We are really interested in AI and the impact it is going to have on the creative industries so jumped at the opportunity to work for a client in that field. Basically, the brief required a classic rebrand including a new visual identity, brand positioning and tone of voice.

We met with the client and talked about the technology industry, the players in machine learning and the very masculine, gaming orientated world that Graphcore was entering. Striking out against these 'bro clichés' became a large part of our design direction. We realised pretty quickly that the brand needed to be a platform for thought leadership. The team were quite far off from launching a product, so had to contribute to their industry in a different way – with content. This led to us positioning Graphcore as both a tech and an editorial brand.

A big influence to our approach came from the sensationalist press coverage of AI and its perceived negative and dystopian effect on society. We were really keen to reframe this conversation and look at how machine learning can have a positive impact. To do this, the brand had to be about people and not machines, it had to be less about stats and more about the amazing things people can do with technology.

First, we interviewed the senior stakeholders, visiting their offices to really understand the machine learning landscape and how their product would contribute to it. This helped us create a robust creative brief and explore three brand territories from it. We created three brands, including logos and websites to show Graphcore how each direction would appear. ▸
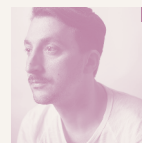
PROJECT FACTFILE

BRIEF: This project was a rebrand that included a new visual identity, brand positioning and tone of voice. The work eventually covered a bespoke typeface, website, pattern generator, digital guidelines and implementation across physical and digital touchpoints.
CLIENT: Graphcore, www.graphcore.ai
AGENCY: Pentagram, www.pentagram.com
PROJECT DURATION: Five months
LIVE DATE: June 2017 (ongoing)

LUKE POWELL
Partner, Pentagram
Like Jody, Luke studied at Central Saint Martins. Running Hudson-Powell with his brother from 2005, his work covered brand identities, motion graphics, web design, creative technology, immersive experiences and art commissions, with clients including Diesel, Coca-Cola, Nickelodeon, Uniqlo and Google. His work has been exhibited at the MoMa, Colette in Paris and at the Dazed Live festival.

01 The bespoke graphical style, typeface and approach to imagery that was developed in use.

02 A simple graphic logo was designed based on the typographic approach.
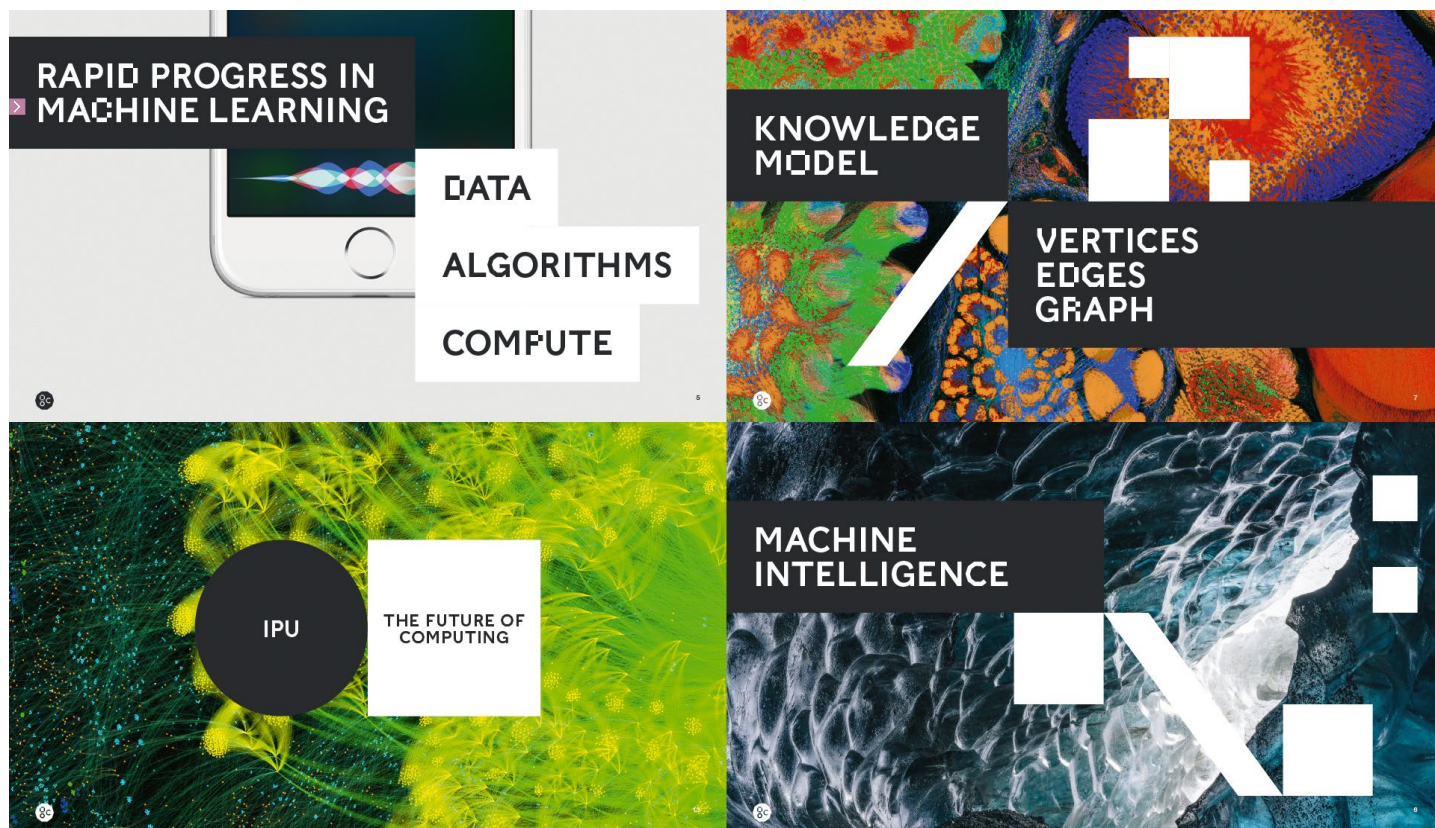
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From these three directions, we landed on the ideas of 'sensing' and 'resolution' pretty early on, and the client was equally excited about it. Working out the core behaviour quickly was great because it gave us loads of time to develop the brand and system around it.

DESIGNING THE ELEMENTS
Luke Powell

We wanted to make something that felt open and accessible – that moved away from masculine techie tropes to something for everyone.

One of the core elements of the identity is Graphcore Quantized, a typeface with randomised characters, which is also the basis of the wordmark. The idea came from conversations with Graphcore about how machine learning breaks information down into constituent parts and, through a process of analysis, builds a more refined and detailed understanding of that information. The typeface reflects this resolution and refinement by taking certain glyphs in the Caslon Egyptian face through four different levels. The original glyphs are replaced, so as you type, you randomly get different glyphs on some characters, at one of four different resolutions. We've also created several randomised versions of the typeface, one of which mixes all the glyphs as often as possible for use in headlines, and others that are less playful and can be used for longer pieces of copy.

The Quadtree generator we designed follows the same theme. It was the result of a couple of ideas we had early on; one was figuring out a way of generating abstract imagery in lieu of adequate stock photography, and another was using the geometry of the typeface to create patterns. We started by coming up with the sort of pattern and grid we'd like to generate manually and then worked backwards from there. Part of this process was figuring out the characteristics that worked well in the patterns, for example,
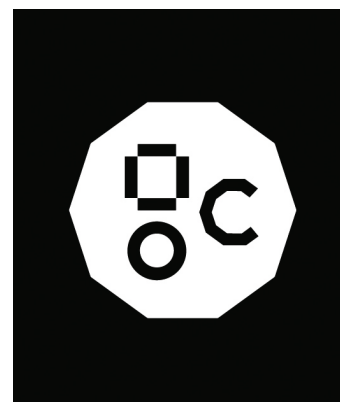
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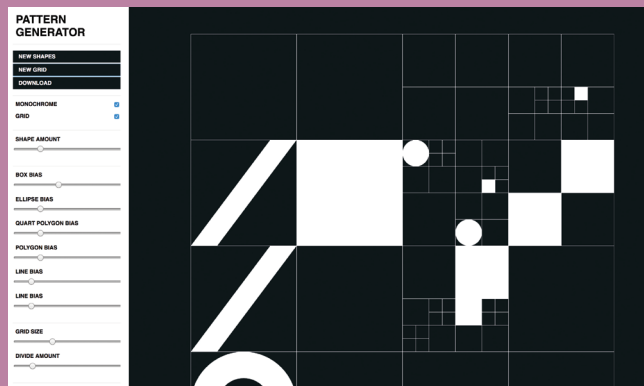
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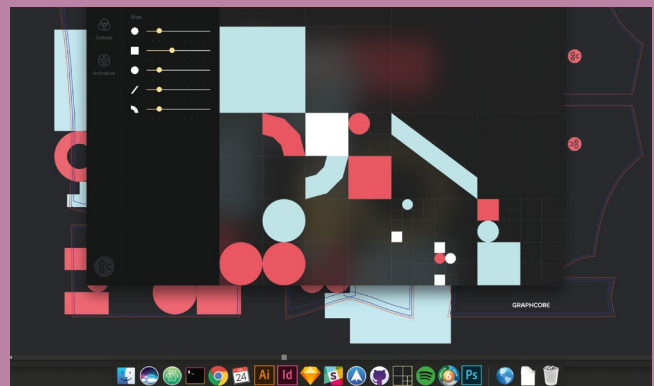
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SHAPE SHIFTING

Designer Ben Leonard explains how Quadtree generator creates imagery to be applied to Graphcore's branding

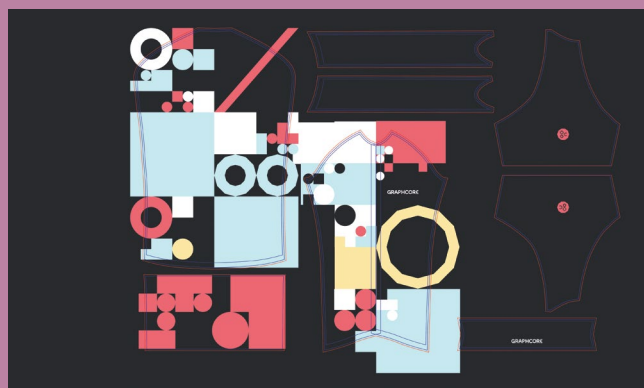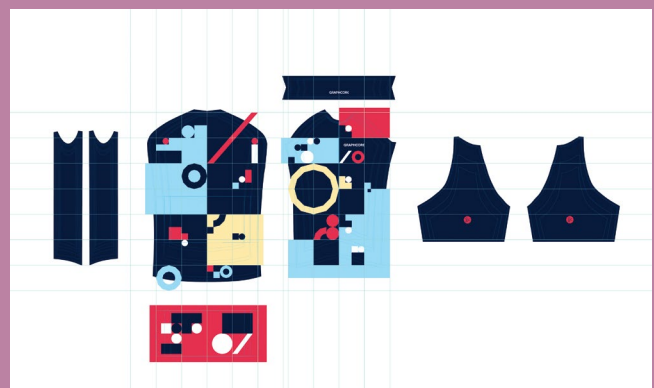We wanted something that was highly customisable, and gave us vector assets, so the Quadtree generator was built using Paper.js, which is based largely on Scriptographer (which unfortunately died with Illustrator CC). However, Paper.js has an SVG export, so the patterns are quick and easy to integrate. Most importantly, it also means we can tweak them. I exported the patterns in plain and added colour later, because I preferred more manual control.

The Graphcore team are keen cyclists, so making a branded cycling jersey for them seemed appropriate. Using guides, I created a grid as I would be stacking multiple patterns. I then brought in the shapes and normalised them to the grid size. As the grid has no margin, and the cells are exponents, this made working with the patterns simpler.

It was tricky getting the aesthetic balance right. The early versions were either too messy, or overly simple. The larger patterns worked well on business cards, but not on the jerseys. Later versions of the generator had the ability to copy directly to clipboard, which made working with it much quicker. We settled on a design where the patterns seemed more considered and less random, avoiding too many small shapes close to the seams, and working on a good contrast between the different shape sizes.

05

01 Shapes generated at random by the alpha version of the generator.
02 The final version of the generator, with a little more control, and colour.
03 Developing graphics for the cycle jersey, using a pattern grid.
04 The chosen generative graphic, applied to the grid.
05 The finished, branded garment ready for the road.

BEN LEONARD
Designer, Pentagram
Ben joined Jody and Luke at Pentagram after graduating from London College of Communication in 2016. He has worked with clients across industries including virtual reality, artificial intelligence, non-profit and audio production. Ben was selected as an It's Nice That Grad in 2016 for his work exploring the intersection between technology and traditional graphic design.

03 Contrast in the curve resolutions of 'C', 'G', 'O' and 'E' demonstrates the four levels of pixelation.

04 Clara McRae's slightly whimsical style works well in juxtaposition with the more precise subject matter.

05 The Graphcore brand guidelines as a digital presentation.

06 Graphcore's newsletter, featuring the new identity, on a smartphone.

▶ when the shapes clump together, when there's contrast between the shape sizes, and so on.

We used the web app Paper.js for the generator, in part because it's something we're comfortable using, but also because you can create tools very quickly. We had a prototype working in a day or so, which we used for much of the project – before turning it into a desktop application and adding a few more features for handover to the client.

Graphcore publishes a lot of articles, so we needed an approach to imagery that made this possible. If you search Google Images for 'AI', you'll find a lot of terrible stock photos of CGI robots. We wanted to create a variety of options for imagery so that Graphcore could avoid this pitfall in the future.

One option is illustration. We approached Carla McRae because of her beautifully human style, and asked her to create large scenes that Graphcore can cut and crop according to a blog's subject. Graphcore has gone on to commission a large library of her illustrations.

The other option is patterns that are made from a Quadtree generator. These can be overlaid on mundane imagery to make it both interesting and ownable.

THE VERDICT

**Jody Hudson-Powell and Luke Powell**
Graphcore was an amazing client, who made something very complicated seem easy and accessible for us as a design team. The team there are doing something very new and see the value of design for their business, which made them a pleasure to work with.

From our point of view, it feels like the whole brand is cohesive and an extension of one system. We're really proud of it and see it as a good example of Pentagram working across many different media and design systems.
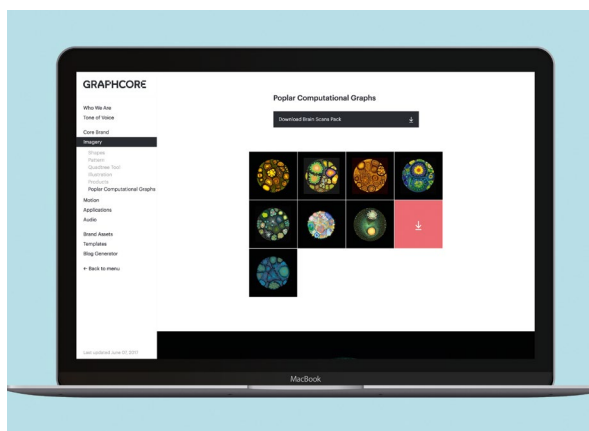
The people at Graphcore seem really happy with our work so far, and we are continuing to work with them to develop their hardware along with company Map and launch their first chip. We're really proud of this ongoing relationship. ▫

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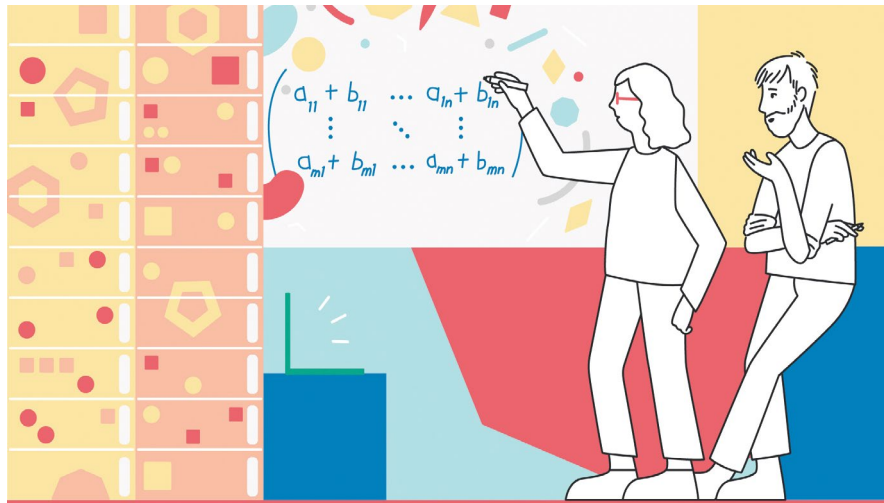
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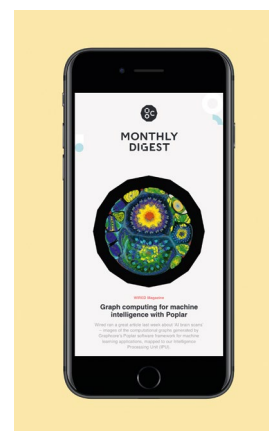
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07 With the identity's generative approach, each business card has the same look, but can be unique.

08 More brand guidelines, here detailing the versatility of the randomised typeface.

09 Detail from the front cover of a book Graphcore has published, designed by Pentagram.

10–12 Inside Graphcore's book there are stunning visualisations of machine learning.

Carlo Luschi
Algorithms

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Bristol BS1 2PH
United Kingdom

www.graphcore.ai

GRAPHCORE

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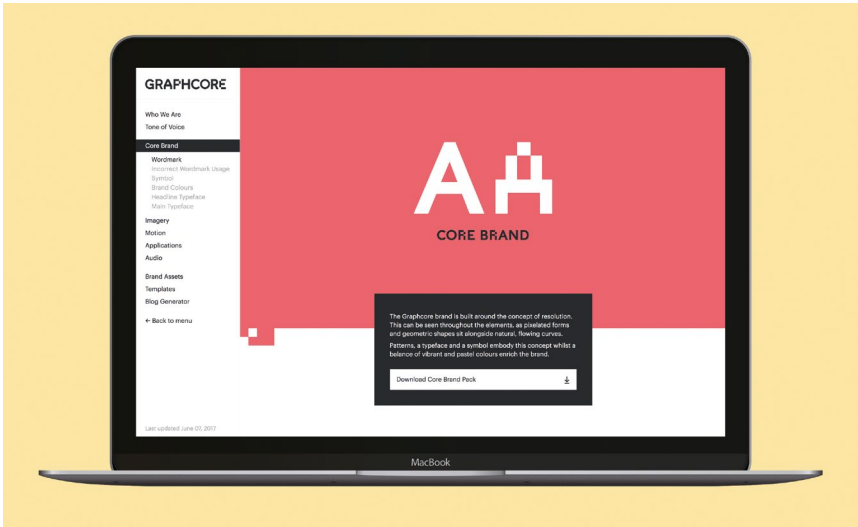
HOW TO ILLUSTRATE FOR AN EVENT

Illustrator **Aart-Jan Venema** shares how he adapted his style to create Green Man festival's World Illustration Award-winning event graphics

AART-JAN VENEMA
Freelance illustrator
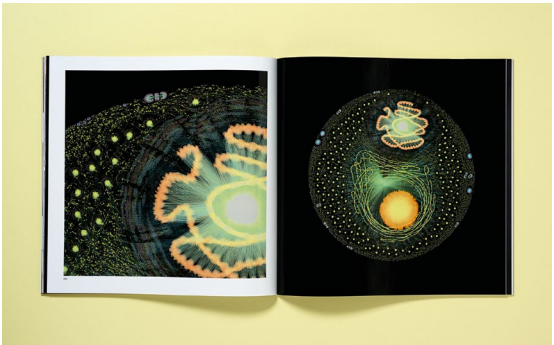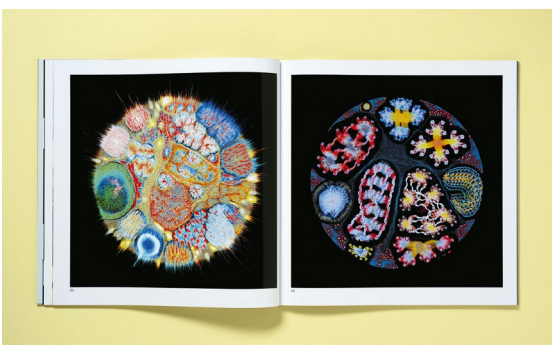Aart-Jan Venema is a Dutch illustrator working and living in The Hague, Netherlands. His work is dominated by unusual characters and has a colourful, whimsical and slightly naive style. Aart-Jan works in both digital and handmade illustration. His inspiration includes adventures, exploration, books, futuristic science and obscure history.
www.aartjanvenema.com

DISCOVERING THE BRIEF
Aart-Jan Venema

Last year I exhibited at the Pick Me Up graphic arts festival in London. That's where my clients on this project saw my work and chose me as a candidate to create illustrations for Green Man's promo materials in 2017. I had known about the festival for quite some time and was jealous of the people who had illustrated it in the past. So I was really stoked when I got the email. It's a dream project, and a lovely portfolio piece.

The overarching theme in the brief was 'discovery'. The client wanted the illustrations to reflect the spirit of the festival and the inquisitive nature of its attendees. The brief also called for the illustrations to explore the unique, weird and wonderful things the festival has to offer. The imagery could have a historical reference or be more abstract. It could show an imagined world, or artefacts that lie beneath the Black Mountains of Wales, where the festival is. Other possibilities included a fictional parallel universe. The client also wanted a little humour and some dark undertones added to the mix.

KNOW WHEN TO CHANGE YOUR IDEA
My clients had liked the hand-painted pieces I exhibited at Pick Me Up, and we considered that choice of media. However, in the end it just wouldn't have been practical for a huge project like this. I thought up plenty of characters, doing lots of crazy things, but one of the guidelines was that I should focus on the environment and strange objects rather than characters. The client didn't want the images to look too 'childish', or too 'human'.

Consequently, one of the key challenges was to change my mindset and use objects and plants to deliver the narrative, looking for ways to give them character. I came up with lots of masks and helmets to add visual appeal. A real lifesaver was the book Art Forms in Nature by Ernst Haeckel, and from it, I discovered new ways to draw scenery. I also received a huge 'inspiration' folder from Green Man.

NEXT MONTH

VECTOR WIZARDRY

How CorelDRAW 2017 could transform your vector technique

01

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▶ DEFINE THE STYLE EARLY ON

The advice I'd give others trying to tackle artwork for a major event is to create a test piece, show it to people and find out where you can go from there. Make lots of changes until everyone is completely happy. With a solid framework, it's much easier to work quickly. If the style is established early on, you don't have to revisit the question with each piece.

ADAPT YOUR IDEA FOR DIFFERENT USES

For the website I had to do the area illustrations. For this I had to make up this whole world, which we could use as a basis for all the other outings as well. The tickets were a different thing. Because there's so much info and text that needs to be readable, I had very limited space to really draw something. The wrist bands were woven in about eight colours, and Green Man was really keen on lots of details, so it was a challenge to get as much information as possible on a really small surface too. For the parking permits, I had to get cars in the mix. It was fun to see in what kind of cars my characters would attend the festival.

EXPERIMENT WITH TOOLS AND COLOUR

Each image began with sketching in pencil. I drew lots of versions until everything felt right so I didn't have to worry about composition when painting the illustration. Usually I work in Procreate on an iPad Pro, but for this job I switched to a Wacom Cintiq and Photoshop. My first versions were really textured to resemble my painted work, but in the end we went for a fairly simple version with only one texture. The colours were set by Bread Collective and Green Man, and I added the blue. Usually I wouldn't use a palette like this, but I'm pleased I was forced to and can now see myself using it again.

The main feedback I received was to go 'weirder' which turns out to be a lot harder than making things more 'normal'. It was refreshing to push myself to the limits, though.

I learned a lot doing this project. For one thing, I was able to create a really consistent series of pieces, and have my work carry the look of an entire festival. I'm very happy with it. If I had to do it again, I would make my PSD files a bit cleaner, which would have saved time when preparing them for the animator. ▫

05

"I was told to go 'weirder', which turns out to be harder than making things more 'normal'"

01-02 Aart-Jan Venema's sketch and final image for the Babbling Tongues area of Green Man.

03 The poster representing the Mountain's Foot area - the main stage at the foot of the Black Mountains.

04 This mad science illo is for Einstein's Garden, the stage with everything from comedy and music to theatre and science.

05 Venema with his dog Loki.

06-09 Venema enjoyed creating cars for his characters to arrive in.

10 For the festival website, Venema illustrated various different areas of the site, which became the basis for various other elements.

11 The tickets posed a particular challenge, as the text needed to be clear and legible, and there wasn't much room for drawing.

12 Out in the wild, the posters list a lot of acts with the illustrative elements forming a border around the line-up.
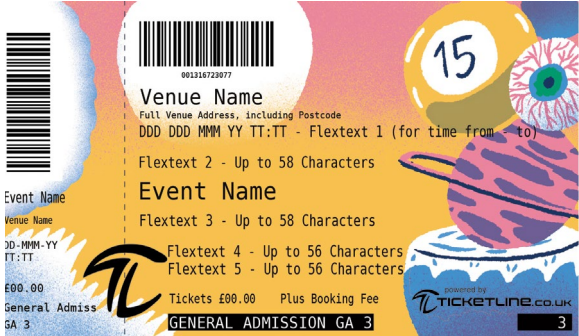

SNEAKY LITTLE CHARACTERS

HOW FACES CREPT INTO THE WORK
Even though the brief was to avoid concentrating on characters, they seem to have snuck in there. The totem pole is a pole with faces, and there's a wagon, which is a head with webbed ears. The floating Yogi guy was another way of getting a character in without it being too human or too childish. Basically the whole project is a mash-up of all the weird things I have in my mind, with inspiration from Green Man. There were some pagan influences, and references from Hieronymus Bosch and Ancient Greece and Egypt.
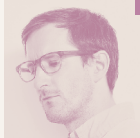
■ **PROJECT DIARY**

THE YOU INSIDE:
A MOVING STORY

Montreal-based agency **lg2** reflects on an evocative project that aims to make the world more accepting of transgender children

STUART MCMILLAN
Creative director, lg2
Born in the UK but raised in Canada, Stuart studied advertising at Falmouth College of Art before starting his career in London. He moved to Montreal in 2007 and has worked as a creative director at lg2 since 2012, where he regularly confuses colleagues with his mangled French.

JEAN-PHILIPPE DUGAL
Art director, lg2
A multi-award winning designer and art director, Jean-Philippe has picked up prizes for his work on several national and international brands. He also helped create Pigefolio.com, the first freelance designer association in Canada, and the design arm of TUX agency in Montréal.

01 Sam concepts - the character needed to be empathetic, recognisable at different ages, and able to carry the emotional storyline.
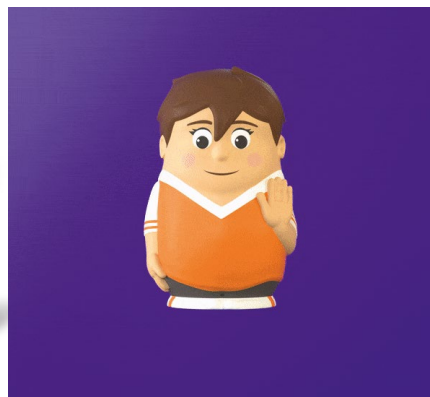
02-05 The Russian doll seemed the ideal motif to express 'the you inside'. The only reservation was that it's been done so many times before.
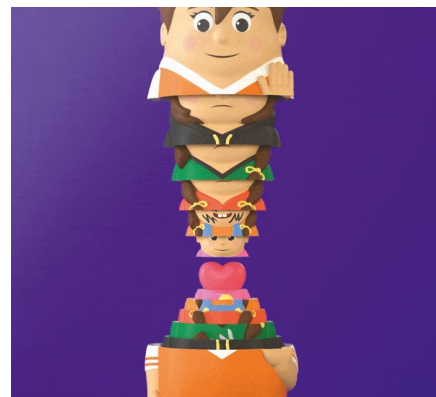

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GETTING STARTED
Stuart McMillan

Last summer, Stephanie Pellicer initiated an incubator program at lg2 called Annexe. Three of us were selected to work with her off-site for two weeks on an unknown brief. We expected to be working on product innovation for one of our corporate clients. Instead, we were introduced to the amazing people from Gender Creative Kids Canada. We met three mothers and their children, two of whom are transgender. For the rest of the morning we listened to them. They told us about their lives, their hopes for the future, the challenges they face.

There was no budget – literally $0 – so we knew we had to find an idea that could be produced for favours or would attract funding. We went in a lot of different directions over the first week and narrowed it down to five or six concepts that we presented to the senior partners at the agency. One of those ideas was the Russian nesting dolls. Another was the script that became Sam's Story. We soon realised that we had to produce both. They made each other so much stronger together.

HOW YOU FEEL INSIDE
Stuart McMillan

The team had the idea to create a Russian doll very early on as it was a simple way to communicate the concept of someone changing on the outside while remaining the same inside. We definitely struggled with the fact that this device has already been used so many times as a metaphor that it's become a visual cliché. The conceptual breakthrough came when we realised that awareness of transgender issues wasn't the problem. Behavioural change was. With all the recent awareness around gender identity has come a depressingly huge and aggressive wave of transphobia. We knew that we could tackle this head-on by stopping it

PROJECT FACTFILE

BRIEF: As part of lg2's Annexe programme, the agency agreed to work on a surprise brief for a non-profit organisation. The only brief the team received was to try and make the world more accepting of transgender children.
STUDIO: lg2, www.lg2.com
FILMMAKER: Rodolphe Saint-Gelais, www.rodstgelais.blogspot.co.uk
3D DESIGNERS: SHED, www.shedmtl.com
PROJECT DURATION: 12 months
LAUNCH DATE: June 2017
KICKSTARTER: http://theyouinside.com
WATCH THE VIDEO: www.bit.ly/lg2video

FRANÇOIS ROYER MIRAULT
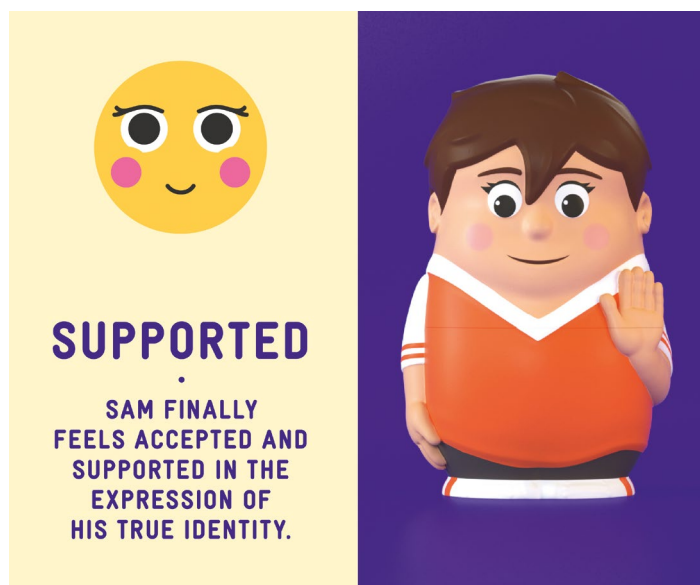**Strategic planner, lg2**
François will tell you he's a strategist at lg2 but he also plays guitar for local heroes The Moonlight Club and helps run restaurant Le Buck in Trois Rivières. After completing a Master's degree in Marketing at HEC Montréal, he worked as an e-commerce specialist at L'Oréal.

06 Children and their parents reacted really positively to Sam's journey.

**07** Part of the campaign is to raise money to manufacture Sam, the toy, via Kickstarter.

06

SUPPORTED
·
SAM FINALLY FEELS ACCEPTED AND SUPPORTED IN THE EXPRESSION OF HIS TRUE IDENTITY.

07

PROBLEM SOLVED

BRINGING SAM TO LIFE

Jean-Phillippe Dugal on writing and animating Sam's Story

We worked with the incredible artist and filmmaker Rodolphe Saint-Gelais through our friends Roméo & Fils. He's an animator at the National Film Board of Canada during the day, so this became his passion project in his free time.

The idea for the script came after researching the personal stories of transgender people around the world. Each story was unique, but there were many similarities in the emotional journeys. Feelings of confusion, fear of rejection by their parents and friends, actual rejection by people they cared about, and many horrible examples of aggressive transphobia.

We started with storyboard sketches and an initial animation test, then spent time on character design and individual scenes. Rodolphe animated in Photoshop because he wanted each scene to be composed like a painting.
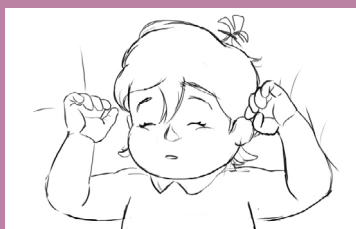
before it started. We had to educate kids, teaching them that while nobody chooses to be born transgender, they can choose not to be transphobic. That's when the idea of Sam became more than a gimmick. It became a tool.

Once we realised how Sam (the toy) and Sam's Story (the film) supported each other, we knew that we had to develop Sam's character in the film first. The toy needed to follow the same emotional journey that Sam did in the film so we had to be absolutely sure about that journey before creating the toy.

We spent a lot of time discussing Sam's clothing, accessories, hair and expressions for the film, as we knew these would be really important for the success of the toy's design. We just kept simplifying and reducing the elements needed to tell the story in the film until we were left with the essentials that we could then integrate into the toy.

## GETTING IT RIGHT
Stephanie Pellicer
Once the film and toy design were completed, we shot the Kickstarter video with Olie and her mom, Annie, from Gender Creative Kids. The GIFs and illustrations were created by our 3D designers at SHED. François Royer Mireault and I led the development of the Kickstarter page, and Jean-Phillippe designed the collateral material. We needed to ensure that Sam functioned as a valid educational toy so the e-book and in-box pamphlet were

STEPHANIE PELLICER
Account director, lg2
A natural entrepreneur, Stephanie started her
first successful business at the age of 12,
a children's day camp. A native of Montreal,
her career has taken her to several advertising
agencies around the world and she now works
as an account director at lg2.
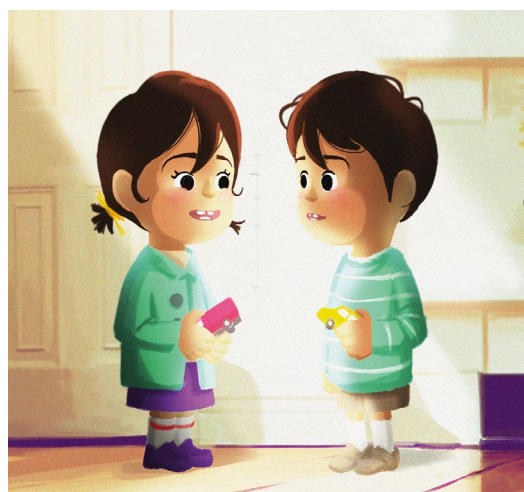
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really important to get right. From a graphic
perspective, this is where you can really see
how important the design system was for The
You Inside project, uniting the film, the toy, the
Kickstarter campaign and all the collateral.

The response has been overwhelming. We
know this is a sensitive subject and we tried so
hard to get it right, so reading all the comments
from trans kids and their parents telling you
how much they love the project is reassuring.
It's a subject that also stirs a lot of hate and fear
so that's been equally overwhelming. But this
just underlines how important this is and how
difficult the world can be for those who don't
conform to the reactionary's idea of what a
human is supposed to be.

Watching the film for the first time with
Gender Creative Kids and everyone at lg2 was
incredibly touching. Many of us are parents and
watching our children discover Sam's Story with
Olie and Annie in the room was amazing. □
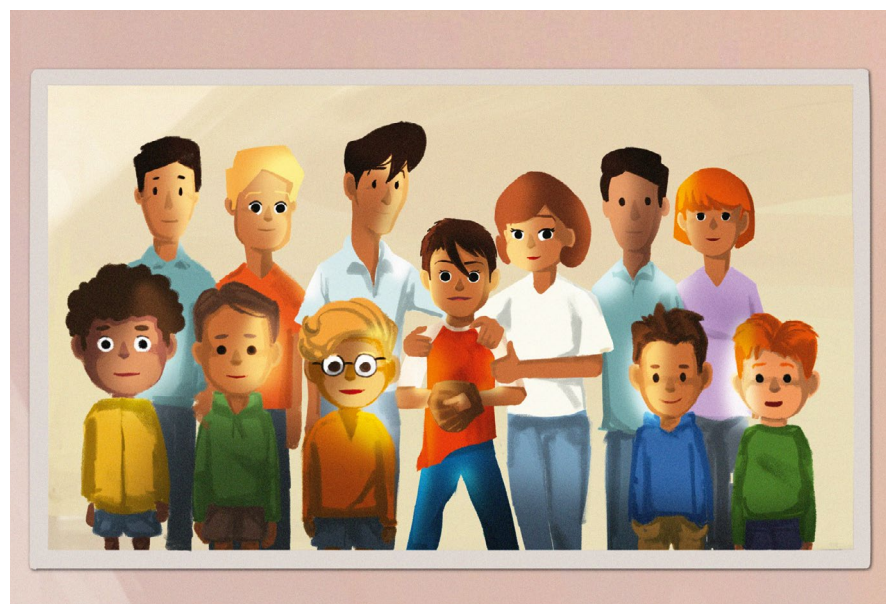
09

08 A still from
The You Inside,
an exceptional
animation by
Rodolphe
Saint-Gelais.

09 Sam's
acceptance as
a transgender
kid is supported
by secondary
characters such
as parents, friends
and school staff.

10 Print collateral
will support
transgender kids,
and help others
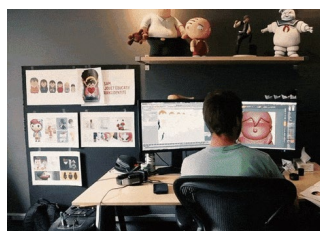to understand
and accept them.

10

LIVING DOLL

**Jean-Philippe Dugal
on transforming 2D
designs to 3D dolls**

Once Sam's characters were
determined in 2D at each age for
the film, art director Jean Landry
created initial sketches in Photoshop.
This allowed us to quickly refine the
essential elements and make design
choices like the colour palette before
briefing the 3D magicians at SHED to
turn that person into a toy that children
would want to engage with. It needed
to be bright, fun and tactile. It took a lot
of work to ensure that Sam's character
was recognisable at each emotional
stage. Gab Grenier and his team at
SHED modified the 2D sketches to
function as valid nesting dolls.

Reed design writing Words.

Reed Words *is a brand writing agency based in London, working across the globe with clients such as Skype, Disney, and London's National Theatre, as well as creative partners such as Mucho, FITCH and SomeOne. The work covers brand strategy, voice, campaigns, UX – you name it. Or get them to name it – Reed Words does that too.*

WHY THE WORDS IN INTERFACES MATTER

In the last instalment of our Words and Pictures series, **Reed Words** argues that writers can help make user interfaces clear, consistent and characterful

Every day, we see hundreds of words without really reading them – words like 'OK' and 'Defrost' and 'I confirm that I am over 18 years of age'.

Most of us use interfaces every day. Yes, the apps on our smartphones are interfaces – but so too are train departure boards, OS maps, and the control panels on our washing machines.

We don't think about the words in these interfaces much, but they can have a powerful effect on usability, particularly the first few times

"To write user interfaces well, you need to step into the mind of a user"

we use an interface, or when we're trying to do something new. If we skip over them, it's usually a sign that they are doing their job well – but it can take a great deal of effort to achieve this.

Consider the opposite. A classic example of a badly worded interface would be a window that pops up on your computer when you try to cancel

Heston Bot – Michelin-starred chef Heston Blumenthal's chatbot – talks to food enthusiasts and offers up new recipes each month based on themes. Getting the 'voice' right was crucial.

an action: 'Are you sure you want to cancel?', followed by 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons. Does 'Cancel' cancel the action, or cancel the cancellation? It's not clear. The words aren't doing their job. On the other hand, 'Yes, cancel' and 'Go back' are pretty clear.

Clarity is the main goal of an interface. But character is important too. When we worked with FreeStyleGames on the brand voice of Guitar Hero Live, the balance between accessibility and tone was critical. That's why the game ended up with a 'Song catalog', rather than the more

prosaic 'Library', or the more playful 'Songbook'.

New platforms are creating new kinds of interface. Consider chatbots and voice assistants, like Amazon's Alexa. These are 'conversational interfaces' – you talk to them in natural language; they understand what you're saying, and act appropriately.

To write them well, you need to step into the mind of a user. Skype's chatbot Heston Bot, which we worked on, opens with a big question: 'What's the one thing that stops people from experimenting in the

kitchen?' This feels open and engaging – but actually, the range of likely responses is relatively small. People might say 'laziness' or 'takeaways' or 'too busy' or 'not enough money' or 'dunno'; they probably won't say 'a tyrannical government' or 'Boaty McBoatface'. Even if they do, Heston politely moves the conversation forward: 'For me, the biggest barrier of all is fear.'

As interfaces become more complex, language – like design – will need to work harder. If you don't notice the shift, then we're probably getting it right. ◻

NEXT MONTH

BRAND IMPACT AWARDS 2017: THE WINNERS

INDUSTRY ISSUES

Diversity in design: what we can all do to broaden the range of perspectives in the creative industries

INSIDER ADVICE

Our practical advice series for junior designers continues with a guide to image manipulation

Plus: inspiring projects, current trends and expert analysis from the global design scene

ON SALE 15 SEPTEMBER

*The founder of creative festival OFFF, **Héctor Ayuso**, talks about his Sigur Rós 'fascination', and how the band perfectly marries art and music.*

THE RIGHT NOTE

I have always been attached to the band Sigur Rós. Some people call it an obsession, but I'd rather call it a fascination. Music-wise, the band has helped me overcome many things. I found something I could relate to both emotionally and physically in their music. I have literally chased them all around the world and have attended their concerts at least 15 times, to the point where the band manager has invited me to their private after-concert events, and I've met the group more than once. This is an example of where the saying: 'If you believe it, you will get it,' rings true. I will never forget the day I received an official medal of honour from the band, showing I am one of their true fans.

Sigur Rós have not only created the best music of all time, but the artwork for their albums is so well done that you can easily relate it visually to the music. There's a trilogy of albums that I particularly love. It starts with the 1999 album Ágætis byrjun. The title literally translates to 'a good beginning'. The album cover fits perfectly with the music's mood and its meaning. The band also recreated the artwork in a limited-edition version for the album's 16th anniversary.

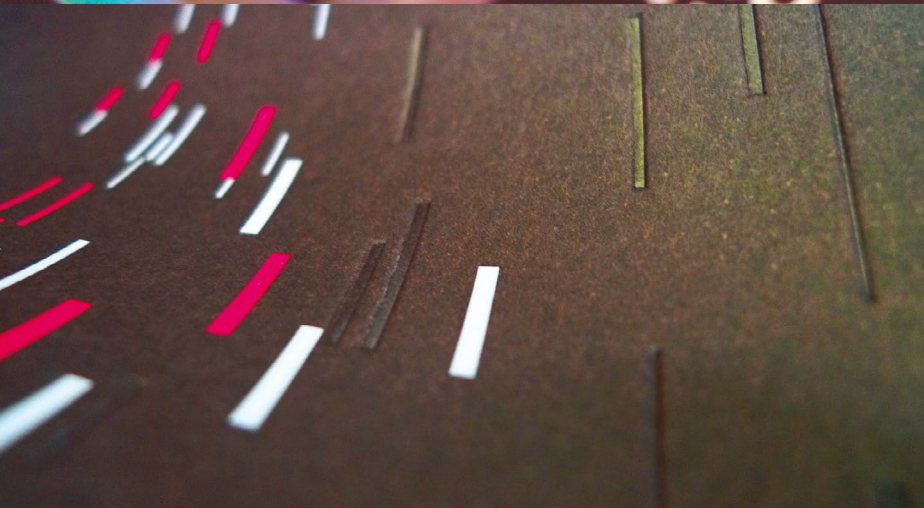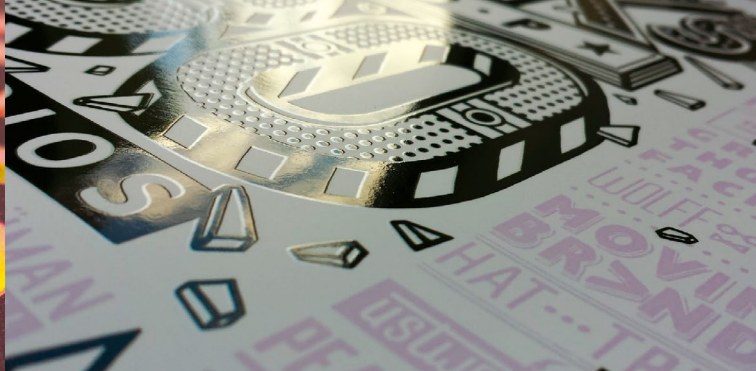Then, in 2002, there was Untitled. When this piece of work first came out, it truly

Above: Héctor Ayuso with his prized medal. Below, left to right: The albums Ágætis byrjun, Untitled and Takk.

represented a masterpiece. The design treatment was copied many times.

And finally, in 2005, there was Takk. Looking at the artwork for the first time was like diving into the dreamy, atmospheric world of Sigur Rós. The stencil-like bird symbols, the trees, the little boy, the colour – everything symbolised the ecstatic, warm feeling you get when you listen to the music.

When a band can provide such an emotional and intense experience through both music and artwork, you know they should be breaking records all over the world. The band has given so much inspiration, and proved that art and design can be just as important as the music. I've even been inspired to cover 30 per cent of my body with tattoos of Sigur Rós artwork. □

With **no experience** or time to return to university, Theo Witrylak saw his design career dreams slipping away. But after studying 9 months at Shillington, he works at digital agency EPAM.

"Shillington's course worked perfectly for me. The 9 month part-time structure meant I could realistically take on board all the information I was being taught, practice and improve my design skills at home as well as have time to get further design inspiration.

When it came to the job hunt, Shillington was amazing at helping—they put me in contact with loads of potential employers, and I was eventually hired by an agency that attended our Graduate Exhibition."

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